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CALVINIST CONTACT

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VIEWPOINT

Jesus Christ the Servant

We often think of the Bible's "leading citizens" — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses — with some form of admiration. They were men who walked tall in the faith. They were often described as God's servants, not in the demeaning sense as you might refer to your maids or butlers as servants, but in an honorable sense.

They lived in a time when servanthood was often a humiliating role, a time when there was a very strong class system between servant and master. That is also evident in many of Christ's parables.

Being God's servant, however, meant something quite different. It meant that all that you did was being done for your Master. Being designated as a servant of the Lord, therefore, was quite an honor for men such as Moses, Abraham and Isaac.

The prophet Isaiah, in speaking

about the coming messiah, often refers to Him as "the servant" or "the servant of God." He speaks then of a perfect servant, one whose dedication and total life is devoted to God.

As God's Son, Jesus Christ shared in the glory of perfection. As Son, He ruled and controlled the universe and had the power to heal, to die and to ascend to heaven. He was omnipotent, and He was a servant. He conquered death and washed the filthy feet of His disciples. He was master and servant at the same time.

It is difficult for us to visualize a God who is so almighty that he stoops down to wash our feet. And that was the purpose of His life on earth. He came to serve and to save. He pointed out through his parables and miracles that humility must come before salvation; that the rich can not buy salvation, and

that the Pharisees can not pray their way into heaven.

Jesus was born into a sinful world but He was sinless. He had the faithfulness of a servant, always obeying His Father in heaven. "Thy will be done." But he also had the authority of the Son of God. It was indeed a peculiar combination of authority and servanthood, yet both were necessary to fulfil His task on earth, that of being our Saviour and Redeemer.

Jesus' servanthood tells us a great deal about our task as Christians, as Christ-followers. Christ came to earth with both authority and humility. Since He holds all authority in heaven and on earth, we can only come to Him in humility ... just as Moses did, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

We should all strive to become

"servants of the Lord", ever faithful, ever sure. Why? Out of gratitude. In response to God's kindness in sending Himself to us in the flesh through Jesus Christ.

We will be hearing the Christmas story on several occasions during this Christmas season. We will be looking at the virgin birth, we will be reading Mary's Song of Praise, we will be listening to choirs and concerts and cantatas.

His birth means so much for all of us. He was born to save us from our sins. He was born to redeem. He was born to serve His heavenly Father so that we might learn from Jesus how best to serve Him.

We must become humble in our lives and our faith so that we may be counted blessed as servants of God.

Keith Knight

The Cover Story

By way of tradition, the cover design on this Christmas issue was created by John Knight of Grand Rapids, Mich. The design is based on the words of Hymn 336:2 and 3, found reprinted here.

Though circled by the hosts on high,
He deigned to cast a pitying eye
Upon His helpless creatures;
The whole creation's Head and Lord,
By highest seraphim adored,
Assumed our very nature.
Jesus, grant us,
Through Thy merit to inherit
Thy salvation;
Hear, O hear our supplication.

Rejoice, ye heavens; thou earth, reply;
With praise, ye sinners, fill the sky,
For this His incarnation.
Incarnate God, put forth Thy power,
Ride on, ride on, great Conqueror
Till all know Thy salvation.
Amen, Amen!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Praise be given
Evermore by earth and heaven. Amen.

-Philip Nicolai, 1599

the servant

he laid aside
his garments
to become
the servant
of them all
going from one
to the other
amid the stunned
silence...
in humility
and love
he knelt down
with basin
and towel
to wash
their dusty
weary feet...

then he spoke
of loving
one another
and how
to be great
in his kingdom
not by strife
but by becoming
servants
washing the dusty
weary feet
of one another...

lord help us
to remember
how to be great
in your kingdom
thank you
for being
the perfect servant...
thank you
for loving us
to the end...
thank you
for laying aside
your garment
that we may be
clothed
with new robes
of righteousness...

matthew 23:11

r.v., richmond b.c.

Meditation at Christmas

Christ, you were born with power
enough to fell a universe of
enemies of God,

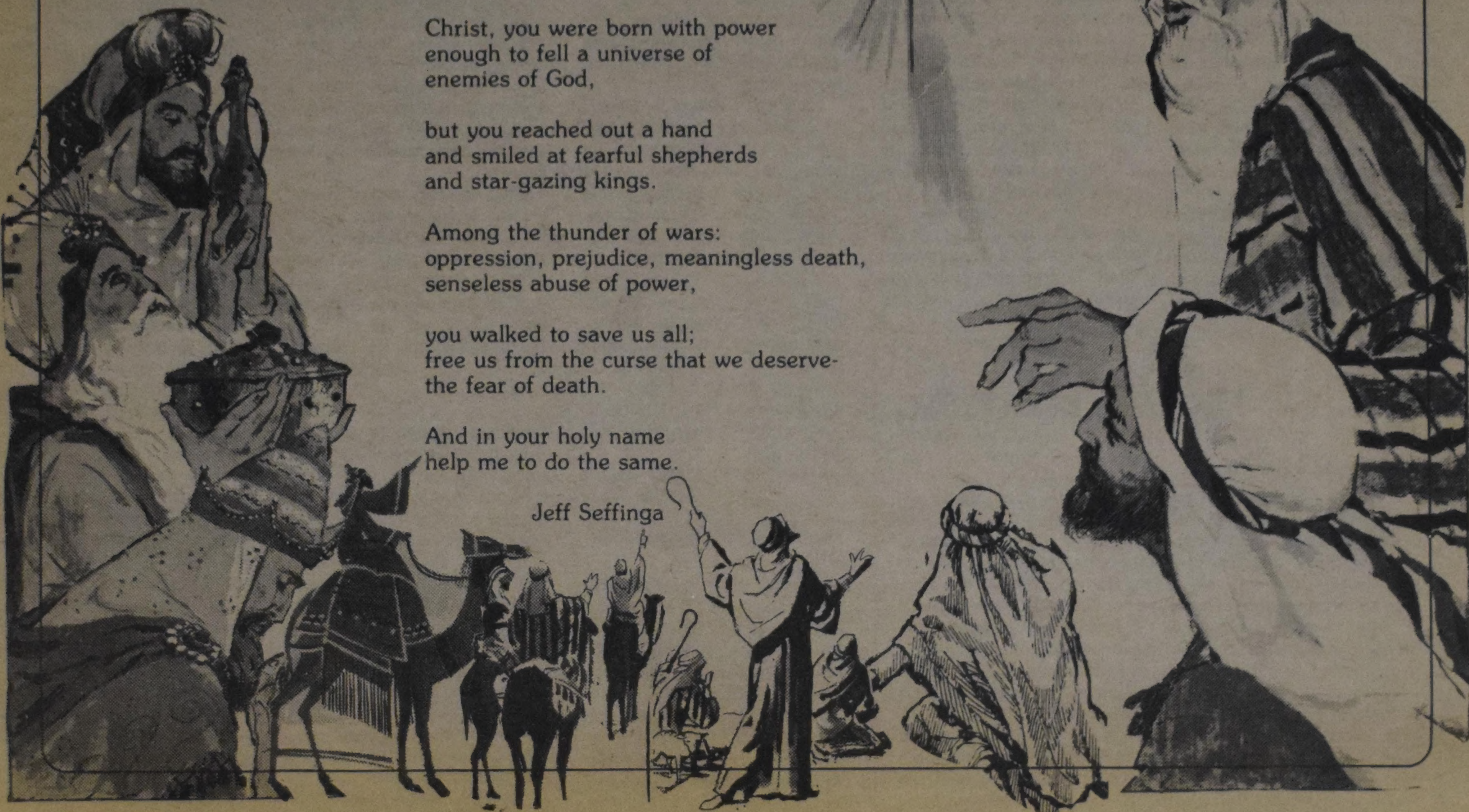
but you reached out a hand
and smiled at fearful shepherds
and star-gazing kings.

Among the thunder of wars:
oppression, prejudice, meaningless death,
senseless abuse of power,

you walked to save us all;
free us from the curse that we deserve—
the fear of death.

And in your holy name
help me to do the same.

Jeff Seffinga



DATELINE: THE WORLD

by Rev. Johan D. Tangelder

Christmas in the Philippines

Christmas in tropical Philippines. How different from Canada and its way of celebrating the festive season. Different foods — rice, imported apples from Korea, fish, chicken and various types of bananas.

The fields are green; no snow and ice. Sugar cane is harvested. Trucks rumble down the road, delivering tons of cane to the refineries. Daily, our children play in the backyard of our house. We don't need logs for the fireplace nor warm clothing. This year we will spend the week between Christmas and New Year in a cottage at the beach of the Sulu Sea.

Do we miss celebrating Christmas in Canada? We do! No family re-unions, choir evenings, Christian school program, candle light service.

Christmas in the tropics. Yet some of the songs we hear over the radio remind us of North America. "I am Dreaming of a White Christmas" and "Jingle Bells (Dashing Through the Snow)." The irony of it all is — the Philippine weather is closer to the East and Bethlehem than to Europe and North America.

Christmas festivities in the Philippines last for a month. Families gather for re-unions. Business is difficult to conduct. The post office services are erratic. Children go from house to house singing Christmas carols. Many give the young singers a small donation. On two different occasions, we had a large group of young people from our churches visiting our home to sing Christmas carols in Tagalog, Ilonggo, Spanish and English. As it is the custom here, we served refreshments after their performance and give some money. Some Christian groups go carolling to raise funds for evangelism programs or pews for their church.

Yes, the Christmas season is different for us here. But it does not matter where we are, the message of Christmas is still the same. The human needs, pains, longings, hopes, anxieties and frustrations are the same. The questions of sickness, death, loneliness are the same. Our friends back home share with us through letters their concern about the chaotic world situation, the rise in unemployment, inflation, the spiralling cost of living, crime rate, the threat of another global war, the future. They write about their children's education, their relationship to God and their purpose for living.

People here have the same concerns, hopes and aspirations. I met a bright young man who was embittered and frustrated. He couldn't find a job despite his strenuous efforts. He blamed everybody and everything for his miserable lot. He had neither peace with God nor with his fellow man, nor with himself. Parents are worried about their children's future. Young people are searching for an answer to their life's questions. They are concerned about their schooling, grades, prospects for a job. They express their anxiety about the social injustice they see in their society. They are still idealistic. Therefore, the hardships their compatriots experience do grieve them. They want solutions. And wherever I travel, people express their longing for peace.

Yes, around the world, people are the same. Their needs are the same. And so is the answer to their problems, aspirations and broken-heartedness. In this Christmas season, I draw your attention again to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the ever living God, who was born in Bethlehem's stable on that first Christmas day, nearly 2000 years ago. He ministered

for 3 years in Palestine, and died on a Roman cross for all who place their trust in Him. He took upon Himself the curse of sin.

Also, His death was Satan's defeat. Light triumphed over darkness. But Jesus' death was not the end to a ministry. Instead it was the beginning of a new life, the entrance of hope into a dying world. Christ rose again from the dead and He ascended into heaven. He is now at the right hand of God the Father. This familiar truth is the precious news we may spread throughout the Philippines.

Thanks be to the Lord that Christmas celebrations and the meaning of the season do not depend on the snow

and physical circumstances. Whether in cold Canada or in tropical Philippines, or wherever in the world, Christians can sing their song of joy and hope:

Joy to the world! the Lord is come.
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.
He rules the world with truth and
grace,
And makes the nation prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love.

I wish all the readers of Calvinist Contact a very blessed Christmas!

SHALOM

May God grant you
a Joyous Christmas
and a Blessed New Year.

Valentine Travel Service Ltd.
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Baldwin, Dirk, Rikie, Cecile, Renie, Karen,
Laurie, Danny, Leif, Jane

Church Page

Getting the most out of catechism class

Admonition and advice

The Tuesday evening division of the Church School is off to a good start. We're happy to have a full complement of regular and substitute teachers and we are much aware of and thankful for the members of the congregation who have agreed to pray for the students who come and learn.

Parents, your students have a real responsibility for these classes also! Please urge your children to come to their class on time. The little store at the

corner seems to be a real drawing card, and going there causes some of our students to come late to their classes. It's frustrating to have to start two or three times because students come late. Some of the older classes also bring in their junk food so that the consistory room begins to resemble a lunch room.

Then there's the matter of homework. About half of the Grade 11 and 12 classes come totally unprepared. Hence the lesson is "boring" and the

teacher is faced with half a class which can engage in discussion and another half which hasn't got any idea what's going on. That's far from ideal.

Parents of Grade 9, 10 and 11 classes are reminded that these students take home an attractive magazine called "Landmarks" which has a corner called "Around the table" suitable for family devotions. Please use this!

The 9:30 class is a real joy to teach. Thirty people, mostly adults have advanced quickly and together we're tackling a challenging book called "I Want to Be a Christian" by J.I. Tacker. I look forward to some good discussions in this class.

London I Chr. Ref. Church
London, Ont.

Thank God for Christian Education

A spokesman for four Ontario Teachers' Federations recently said: "The child of Ontario is not a family child, he is an institutional child. It is not the school that is the extension of the home, but the home that is the extension of the school." This spokesman, Dr. Laurier LaPiere was hired by them to head an influential commission studying the education of the young child.

Of course, not all public school supporters share that view. But if a man in such a position makes such statements, we can not brush it off as one man's opinion. That is a philosophy that you find in communist countries, but one that is totally contrary to the Bible.

As a new school year starts, we should be thankful to God for Christian schools, and we should pledge ourselves to the support of schools that seek their direction from Christ the Lord.

Ebenezer Chr. Ref. Church
Trenton, Ont.

Catechism is serious business

Now that the catechism season is about to commence, it might be in order to let the parents know what is generally expected of the students.

First of all, it would be of benefit to both student and parents, that the lessons were studied at home. It is alarming to note from last year's classes as to how few parents actually got involved with their child's catechism lesson. Most, if not all parents shipped their children off to class and let the teachers do the rest.

The old sayings, "We know it all" or "We have heard that before" is a myth. Our stu-

dents do not know it all and many of them do not know the most elemental facts about their relationship to Jesus Christ. It was also ascertained from last year's classes that the Bible is slowly being relegated to a status of a low interest book. In many homes it is no longer an everyday book as a source of guidance and comfort.

Many of our students need to make a very strong effort to go below the surface of knowledge and gain some depth. The opportunities are there and it is time we helped our students break down the tempting barrier of shallow materialism before it is too late.

In order for a catechism class to be effective, all students should do homework. Above all, students should learn to study their Bible — use it and know it. It should not be treated as an ornament.

All students should behave themselves in class. No class time should be wasted telling students to settle down and behave. Parents will be held responsible for student behaviour. Do not waste this precious time!

All students should read their Bible faithfully, daily.

Bethel Chr. Ref. Church
Brockville, Ont.

PASTORAL PONDERING

The old Rome still lives

"The former Pope made an unusual gesture, granting 'to all' who heard the words (of his first blessing), either in person or by broadcast, a plenary indulgence." Time magazine, reporting this, goes on to explain what most Reformation Christians know very well: "In Catholic belief, all sins, though forgiven, must be atoned for — either here on earth or, after death in purgatory. For those truly repentant, a plenary indulgence cancels the debt for all past sins." Protestants will notice that the old Rome still lives.

What is strange is that today not all Roman Catholics profess to hold this "Catholic belief" and others like it. Well-known Catholic theologian Hans Kung protests the Catholic teaching that the Pope is infallible and questions the idea that the bishops are successors in direct line of the apostles, especially the pope of Peter. He finds the ground of faith in God alone in Jesus Christ; "We don't believe 'in' a church." He has a lot of people with him. Will there be a schism, or will evangelical Catholics succeed in Reforming the church of Rome, something Luther and Calvin could not do? We should be much in prayer for Rome's reformation according to the gospel of the Lord.

Rev. J. Koole
Ebenezer Chr. Ref. Church
Trenton, Ont.

Know the Creeds

No church can live without a creed, whether implicit or explicit. The endeavor to have no creed but the Bible is successful only so long as there is common agreement as to what the Bible teaches. "No creed but Christ" is a well-known slogan. But who is Christ? What is the nature of his person and work? Since it is the very nature of the church to confess what she believes the rise of confessional statements or documents was (and is) inevitable. The creed is simply the Church's understanding of the meaning of Scripture. The creed says: Here is how the Church reads and receives Scripture.

The history of creed-making reveals that they were usually born in a time of theological and confessional controversy. But creeds are more than guards against and signposts to heresy. They are more than the record of the Church's interpretation of the Bible in the past and the authoritative guide to hermeneutics in the present. They were also developed as an aid in the teaching ministry of the Church. We need only think of the place of creeds in catechism teaching and preaching. Finally, creeds are also a standard, a testimony and witness to the world. Here, we can say, read our doctrinal standards, our three forms of unity and you can see and read for yourself where the Christian Reformed Church stands.

In the past four years we have travelled through the Heidelberg Catechism twice together. Many of us are quite familiar with its landscape, but not nearly as familiar with our other two forms of unity, I would assume for this coming season I would like to take a walk with you through the Belgic Confession. This will honor the concern of our Reformed Churches that one of the Sunday worship services deal with the substance of our confession (The Heid. Cat. is actually the prescribed one), so as to ensure that a minister will not be too one-sided in his preaching but declare that whole counsel of God. Let us pray for and count on the Lord's blessing in this study so that we may be faithful daily confessors of the TRUTH.

Rev. G.H. Polman
Burdett Chr. Ref. Church
Burdett, Alberta

The Free Reformed Church

The Synod of the Free Reformed Church of North America met in London, Ont. on August 30th and 31st. Rev. P. DenButter was appointed as chairman of the meeting.

Synod as usual, heard a number of reports and recommendations. The Committee for English Sermons requested that each minister submit one sermon per year. The Training Ministers Committee reported the acceptance of Thecharis Joannides, a new student at the Protestant Reformed Seminary in Grand Rapids. Some Canadian churches, it was noted, in reports had difficulties with moral issues, such as marriage, divorce, and worldliness. Synodical advice was requested.

The Retirement Fund of the churches was increased according to cost of living by the Synod. Mr. Peter Feijer of Hamilton, the present administrator of the church paper, *The Messenger*, will leave his post after 25 years of service in this capacity.

The Committee on Unity and Correspondence reported it sent its regrets to the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands over its new "ecclesiastical fellowship" ties with the Christian Reformed Church. However, the Committee is now making contact with the Gereformeerde Bond in the Hervormde Kerk in the Netherlands and with both the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland.

A proposal to set up a denominational fund for the support of Free Reformed education was turned down. The Committee for Education was disappointed with

this decision but also with the response to a questionnaire in this regard sent to church members.

Ministers in the denomination were asked to devote five Sundays per year to the vacant congregations.

Next years Synod will meet in Hamilton on August 29 and 30.

Canadian Reformed Church

Classis Ontario North

met in Toronto, September 14. Rev. J. Mulder chaired the meeting and Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene served as clerk. The Classis dealt with a number of routine matters, but also recommended the request of the Ottawa congregation for a fund-drive among Canadian sister churches for a new church building. The next classis meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 14th.

Classis Ontario South

met in London, Ont. on October 4th and declined the request by the Ottawa congregation. Candidate J. De Jong was examined and admitted to the ministry. He is now serving the London congregation. Both students P.K.A. De Boer and G.H. Visscher were examined and granted the right "to speak an edifying word in the churches for a period of one year." The meeting was chaired by Rev. P. Kingma; Rev. J. Geertsema served as clerk. Classis will met on Wednesday, December 13th.

Regional Synod East

met in London on October 25th. Rev. P. Kingma was chairman and Rev. G. Stam, clerk. The

church archives were discussed and found incomplete. The Toronto congregation requested that Synods meet on Saturday. But the request was not accepted. There were some questions about the funding of the Synods by the Smithville church, but Synod decided it could not comply with the church's request for changes in policy. But it would "inform the treasurer in future to request the Regional names needed from the Classical Treasurer."

CHRISTIAN REFORMED

Called

-to Surrey, B.C., Rev. A.J. Vanden Pol of Cobourg, Ont.

Declined

-to Wyoming, Ont., Rev. John Van Hemert of Langley, B.C.
-to Chilliwack, B.C., Rev. Anthony De Jager of Bowmanville (Rehoboth), Ont.

Ministers' addresses

Rev. Cornelis Pool, 61 Victoria St., Tillsonburg, Ont. N4G 3Z5, (519) 842-3132.

Rev. Richard Stienstra, 3215 Tretheway St., Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 4C1 (604) 859-1235 after February 1.

Classis Hamilton

New stated clerk — Rev. John W. Jongsma, 241 Stone Church Rd. E., Hamilton, Ont. L9B 1B1.

New location

Abbotsford (Trinity), B.C. — corner of Tretheway Street and McLure Road, 3215 Tretheway St., Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 4C1

New clerk

Duncan, B.C. — Mr. G. Berends, 7069 Westholme Rd., R.R. #4, Duncan, B.C. V9L 3W8.

Brantford (Shalom), Ont. — Mr. H. Van Harten, 6 Dunsdon St., Brantford, Ont. N3R 3J2.

Church News

A children's story for Christmas by Rina J. Roos

The lost kitten

"Meow, Meow", cried the kitten in the bottom of the big box. "Why do I have to be in here? Why doesn't Heidi come and let me out? It is so dark in here! I'm so hungry! I'm so thirsty! Please let me out of here."

Poor little kitten in the bottom of the big box. How did you get in the box in the first place? Why would anyone put a cute little kitten in a big box and leave it there all by itself, so lonely, so hungry and so afraid?

Was it only yesterday that she had a happy home, her own warm basket, and little Heidi to feed her and play with her? Then Heidi had put a soft little blanket in the basket of her bicycle and they had gone for a bike ride together. They were only a few blocks from home when Heidi, while petting kitty, lost control of her bike. There had been a loud crash and squealing brakes. Kitty had been thrown way up in the air and landed right in this big awful box on a big truck. The truck had gone to a warehouse. That is where kitty is now.

Where was little Heidi? Would she be out looking for kitty? No, Heidi was not out looking for kitty. Heidi was in the hospital. She was all bandaged up. She was lying very still and looking very pale. Her mother and father were sitting beside the bed. Oh, if she would only wake up and talk to them. If she would only open her eyes. But Heidi did not move, she just lay there very pale and very still.

Back in the warehouse the kitten was crying. "Meow, meow, I'm so hungry! I'm so thirsty! Please let me out of here. Heidi, please come and take me home." But Heidi did not come and it was very dark and quiet in the big warehouse.

The doctor in the hospital talked quietly to Heidi's Mom and Dad. "Mr. and Mrs. Dunnewold", he said, "your little girl is very badly hurt. We're doing everything we can for her but it doesn't look very good. All we can do now is wait and pray."

Mrs. Dunnewold was crying softly and Mr. Dunnewold stood there biting his lip. They could not believe it. Their active, happy little girl lying there in that big hospital bed, not moving at all. In a few days it would be Christmas. How could they celebrate Christmas without Heidi. They did not want to go home. The house was so quiet and empty without their little girl.

As they drove home from the hospital Mr. Dunnewold turned on the car radio. A choir was singing, "O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie". Mr. Dunnewold quickly turned it off. Even the Christmas carol had to remind him of little Heidi — "how still we see thee lie".

Mrs. Dunnewold suddenly thought: "I haven't seen kitty around at all. Wonder where she went to?"

Mr. Dunnewold responded that a neighborhood boy told him that kitty was with Heidi when the accident happened. "She probably got scared and ran away", said Mr. Dunnewold.

Poor little kitten in the bottom of the big dark box. Nobody knows where you are. If Mr. and Mrs. Dunnewold knew, they would certainly come to take you home. Poor hungry little

kitten.

The following morning, Mr. Dunnewold phoned the hospital to find out how Heidi was doing. "Nothing has changed", the nurse said. "She is just holding her own". After breakfast they drove back to the hospital. It was starting to snow. It was the first snow this winter. How excited Heidi would have been about the snow. They sat by Heidi's bed again. Was it their imagination or did she not look quite so pale anymore? Mr. Dunnewold kept talking to her, holding her hand, hoping for some response. He was telling her about the snow outside, and that she had to wake up so they could make a big, big snowman.

The doctor came by on his morning rounds. While he was there talking to them they heard little Heidi moan. "Sounds like she is trying to wake up", said the doctor. "That is good."

"Heidi, Heidi, can you hear me?" cried Mr. Dunnewold. "Shhh, she is trying to say something. What is it Heidi?"

They heard her whisper very softly, "kitty, kitty."

"Kitty is not here Heidi but we will find her."

"Kitty, kitty" moaned Heidi again.

Mr. and Mrs. Dunnewold were so happy that Heidi was waking up. The doctor took them aside and asked about the kitten. He told them they should try to find it and bring it to Heidi.

If only they knew where kitty was! "Meow, meow," cried the kitten in the bottom of the big box. "Why doesn't Heidi come and let me out?"

Mrs. Dunnewold phoned the Police Department to find out if they knew anything about a kitten at the scene of the accident. The friendly policeman said he was sorry but there was nothing in the file about a kitten. He promised that he would put out a bulletin so that everybody would be watching for kitty.

Mrs. Dunnewold then phoned the animal shelter but they didn't have a grey and white kitten there either.

"We've just got to find her", said Mr. Dunnewold.

Mr. Wilson was a truck driver. He lived one block from Heidi's home. He often went on long, long trips. Sometimes he was gone for three or four weeks. But tomorrow would be Christmas, so he did not have to go out of town. He had parked his big truck in the warehouse. It would stay there until after New Year's. Mr. Wilson lived all by himself. He had no family. There was nobody to care about him. Christmas did not mean much to him. He would rather be out there driving his big truck on the highway. That is what he liked best: driving his big truck.

He turned on the television, then turned it off again when nothing interested him. Then he turned on the radio. An announcement was being made about a little girl in critical condition after a bicycle accident. The announcer said that her grey and white kitten was lost and that it was very important for her recovery that this kitten be found. Mr. Wilson was still thinking about the little girl and the kitten when he decided to go and check

"Meow, meow", cried the kitten in the bottom of the big box. "Why doesn't Heidi come and let me out?"

the oil in his big truck. He unlocked the door to the warehouse and switched on the lights. It was very quiet in the warehouse. He lifted up the hood of the big truck.

What was that! Did he hear something? It sounded like a cat somewhere. There he heard it again. "Meow, meow". It seemed to be coming from the back of his big truck. Mr. Wilson jumped up on the back of the truck. He moved a few boxes. He looked inside one big box and there, deep down in a corner — Oh! He couldn't believe it. There was the cutest little kitten he had ever seen. It looked up at him with big scared eyes. "Oh, you poor little kitten. What are you doing here in this big box? How did you get in the box? Come here. I'll take you home and give you some nice warm milk. Don't be afraid, I won't hurt you." He picked up the little kitten, talking to it quietly.

He took it home and fed it. It was so hungry. He liked watching it gobble up the food. Then he remembered what he heard on the radio. Could this be the kitten they were looking for? Mr. Wilson was all excited. It must be the lost kitten. Didn't they say it was grey and white?

Mr. Wilson put on his coat. He picked up the kitten and off they went to the hospital.

The nurse at the desk in the hospital saw them coming. "Sorry sir", she said, "no pets allowed here".

"But, but," started Mr. Wilson.

"Would you kindly take that animal outside, sir", interrupted the nurse.

Just then Heidi's doctor walked by. He looked at the big man holding the tiny little kitten in his arms. "That isn't the kitten we are looking for, is it?" he asked.

"Well sir, that's what I want to know", explained Mr. Wilson.

"We'll soon find out", answered the doctor. "Her Mom and Dad are with her right now. Poor little girl, she keeps asking for her kitten."

The doctor ran up the flight of stairs. Mr. Wilson did not know what to do but follow him. He could hear the nurse yelling behind him: "Just a minute, sir".

The doctor called Mr. and Mrs. Dunnewold out of the room. "Is this Heidi's kitten?" he asked.

"Oh! It is! It is!" cried Mrs. Dunnewold. "Where did you find it? We've been looking all over for it."

She took the kitten to Heidi's bed. "Heidi! Heidi! Look here! Kitty has been found."

Heidi opened her eyes. She smiled when she saw the kitten. Mrs. Dunnewold gently laid Kitty down beside Heidi. Heidi stroked its soft fur.

The doctor said: "She'll be all right now."

Mr. Dunnewold gently took the kitten out of Heidi's hands. "We will take her home, Heidi, and put her in her own little basket." Heidi nodded her head. She was so tired. She closed her eyes and went back to sleep.

Mr. and Mrs. Dunnewold learned from Mr. Wilson how he had found the kitten. He said, "And here I thought I would have a companion for Christmas."

Mrs. Dunnewold exclaimed, "Oh!

But you must come and spend Christmas with us. It is going to be so lonely without Heidi. We would just love to have you."

So Mr. Wilson spent Christmas day at the Dunnewold's home. They went to church in the morning. The minister in his prayer thanked God for Heidi's recovery. Mr. Wilson thought that was nice. He had not been to church since he was a little boy. The minister preached about baby Jesus, how this little baby was God's own son, how Jesus was born in Bethlehem and later died on the cross so that you and I may go to Heaven.

Mr. Wilson had never thought about that. Jesus came also for him? The Sunday school class sang a few Christmas carols. Mr. Wilson was listening with tears in his eyes. Big, tall, lonesome Mr. Wilson who had not been to church for forty years. Now he knew that Jesus loved him. He wanted to learn more about Jesus.

Back home in her own little basket, Kitty was waking up. She was quite content being at home again. There was just one thing bothering her. "Why doesn't Heidi come and play with me? Meow! Meow! I want Heidi to come home."

In the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Dunnewold and Mr. Wilson went to the hospital. How much better Heidi was. She was sitting up in bed, so happy to see them.

She thanked Mr. Wilson for finding Kitty. "I thought I had killed Kitty", said Heidi. "I'm so glad she is all right. Thank you so much Mr. Wilson. "Little girl", said Mr. Wilson, "I should thank you. I'm so happy all this happened. If you had not been in an accident and lost your kitty, I would not have been in church today. I would not know the real meaning of Christmas. I have to thank you."

Two days later Heidi came home. How happy she was to be home again. Kitty sat in Heidi's lap and would not leave her. "Meow! Meow! I'm so happy I'm not in that big awful box anymore. I'm so happy my Heidi is back home."



Journey through the Night

Anne De Vries has set out "to capture in literary form the spirit and agony of those five harrowing years of Nazi occupation" of Holland. This he does in a series of four novels called *Into the Darkness*, *The Darkness Deepens*, *Dawn's Early Light* and *A New Day* under the series title *Journey through the Night*.

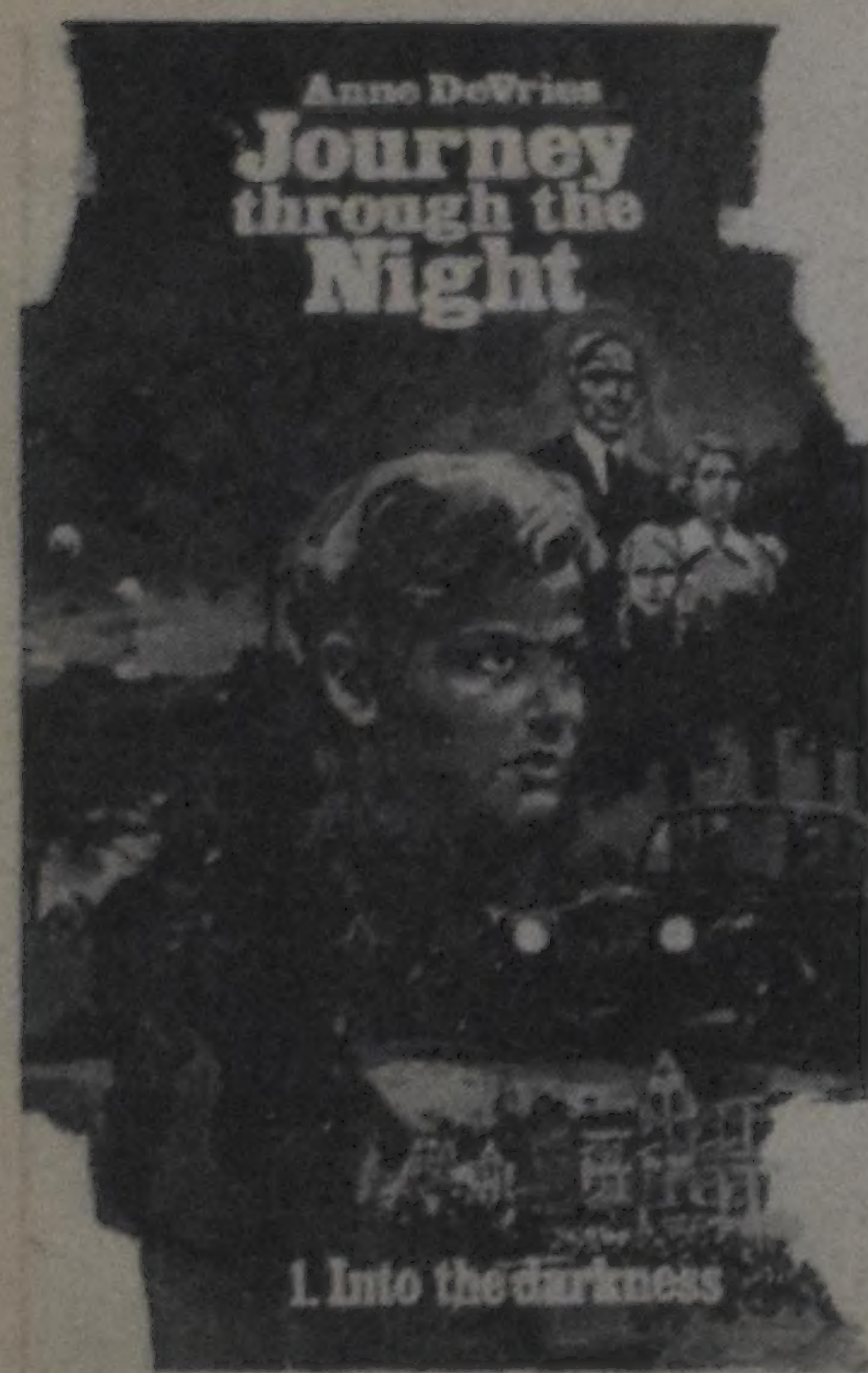
The story is told mostly through the experience of young John De Boer. At the exciting and confusing age of fifteen, John is the oldest of five children of a Christian family thrust into the experiences of the Second World War and the German occupation that followed. John's father is in the thick of the struggle through his leadership in the clandestine resistance movement. The whole family, including John's teenage brothers and sisters, are part of the struggle by hiding their Jewish friends, spreading "illegal" literature, and spirited British fliers back to England.

This all provides the setting for fast action, tragedy, difficult Christian choices, and challenges to great personal courage that make this series good Christian literature and spell-binding reading for teenagers and adults alike.

The excerpt printed here finds the family and their friends facing the question of what to do about a Dutch traitor, Schram, who betrayed Jews to the Nazi S.S. at thirty dollars a head. As the chapter begins we find he has betrayed the Wiesel family and the innocent Jews hiding in his home. Mr. Wiesel was a respected teacher, respected and loved especially by Fritz, John De Boer's younger brother.

There is mature Christian insight when we see this community struggle with the problem, and there is high excitement when John, now eighteen, and his friend William are called upon to deal with Schram, "the Jewhunter."

John Vriend
Principal
Beacon Christian High
School



"Poor man!" said Father. "I don't know whether we'll ever see him again. I hear those camps are a living hell!"

"And all because of that filthy worm, that . . . that stinking Schram!" exploded William. "He's got a few things to answer for!"

"Maybe more than you think," Father said, nodding. "Vander May has checked him out. He has been freed from all regular police duties so that he can spend all his time sniffing out Jews for the Germans. He gets a bounty of

thirty guilders on top of his regular salary for every head he brings in. Apparently, he has already earned well over six hundred guilders in bounties!"

"But . . . but," sputtered William, "we can't just let him go on! We've got to do something!"

"What do you have in mind?" asked Father.

"Do you have to ask?" demanded William. "That piece of human garbage better not get in my way! As far as I'm concerned, he's no longer a human being. We'd be doing the world a favor if we rid it of that piece of filth. Don't you agree?"

"No, William, not altogether," said Father. "We may never act out of revenge. That's always wrong. We may only act to save other lives."

"In this case, what's the difference?"

"Whoever rides the world of this man, or we could say, whoever brings this man to justice will have to give an account of what he has done. First, to God and, then, to his own conscience, and maybe, after the war, to a judge. And then he must be blameless. Would you dare to take the responsibility for Schram's death on your conscience?"

"Yes! Without a doubt, yes!" said William. "But why talk? Nothing's going to happen anyway."

"Well, as a matter of fact, since we're talking about it," said Father, studying his hands, "tomorrow we're having a meeting about this very thing. We don't want to make any snap decisions when it comes to a human life, so we're forming a kind of jury. It will take responsibility for decisions such as we have been talking about. And, Uncle Gerrit, I would very much like to see a wise old head like yours on that jury."

"You can drop the 'wise' if you don't mind. But, all right, I'll be there."

The next day William was waiting as Father and Uncle Gerrit returned after having been gone for several hours. He met them at the door.

"Did you reach a decision?" he asked. Father nodded gravely.

One beautiful, summery day in mid-April, William and John took a bike ride out to Mrs. Van Steen, who had sent Father a note complaining about the Nathans, the young couple whom she was hiding. The husband refused to abide by her rule that he could go out only in the evening. He roamed about at all hours of the day, through the fields and along the roads right up to the city limits.

"Just tell him the truth," Father had said to the young men. "If he doesn't stop endangering the safety of others as well as his own, he will be moved to a place where he'll have to stay in a hole under the floor twenty-four hours a day."

Mrs. Van Steen, a kindly, stooped old lady, was working in the garden beside the house planting potatoes. Ada, Tricia's little fugitive, was helping her. Mrs. Nathan was sitting in the sun by the front door reading a book. Mr. Nathan had gone out for a walk—they had caught him in the act.

In about half an hour, they saw Mr. Nathan coming across the field with a big bouquet of spring flowers. The sight of the visitors didn't unnerve him in the slightest, and the tough message relayed to him by William seemed to make little impression on him. "What on earth can happen to me here?" he snorted. "This place is as quiet as a graveyard!"

"What about the farmers in the fields?" asked William.

"Ah! They're too busy to pay any

attention to me," scoffed Nathan. "And I always take a roundabout route on the way back, so they have no idea where I live."

"Nevertheless," said William emphatically, "you'd better understand that this is the last . . ."

"Someone's coming!" Ada cried, rushing into the room. "He's almost here. A man in a grey suit!"

The Nathans and Ada quickly fled to their hiding place. William was simply going to stay put, but suddenly John leaped up and grabbed him by the arm, pulling him into the bedroom too. John had glanced through one of the small windows and had caught a glimpse of the visitor. He felt his pulse pounding in his throat.

"It's Schram, the Jewhunter!" he whispered in William's ear.

"You sure?" asked William.

"Positive!"

He saw William looking at him with that look he had seen a couple of times before—a hard, threatening look. He knew what William was thinking: "This is our chance, and we can't let it slip."

Suddenly, he felt queasy and weak in the knees. The room began spinning and tilting so that he had to lean against the wall for support. But it passed as quickly as it had come. He thought of Jake Vande Berg, and at the same time the lines of his poem passed through his mind:

for not our own cause did we
choose,
nor do we stand or fall in our own
frailty.

He felt new strength flowing into him, banishing all doubt and hesitation. Since the death sentence had been passed on Schram, Ron Mulder and Art Van Dyk had tried to ambush the man at least twice without success. He had escaped them each time, perhaps because he suspected something. But apparently it hadn't frightened him enough to make him quit this bounty hunting. This was their chance to save dozens of lives. They couldn't let it pass.

Mrs. Van Steen came back inside.

They didn't hear her. All their attention was fixed on Schram, who was just about to the end of the long drive. If he turned to the right, he would be heading for town along the lonely forest lane—a good place to . . .

Yes, he was turning right! They charged for the door, but John held his friend back for a moment. He had suddenly taken the lead.

"Wait a minute," he said. "He can still see us between the trees."

"We'll let him get past the fork in the road," whispered William, "and then we'll pass him and stop him. But we haven't any weapons, and maybe he does. Can you jump him? You know judo!"

"Now! Let's go!" said John, sprinting for the bikes.

John got to the bikes first and went racing down the driveway, keeping his eye on Schram, who kept disappearing around the bends in the crooked road.

Only when Schram turned left on the heavily wooded stretch before the main road, did John begin to put all his weight into pedaling. William was shouting something, but his words didn't sink in. Thirty guilders per Jew—man, woman or child! He had collected his betrayal money for the last time, the bloody headhunter! It had to be done! And now! Anywhere on this

stretch would do. The road was completely deserted.

The Judas! He was riding with one hand on the handlebars, and he seemed to be directing a band with the other. He looked happy! In fact, he was whistling a tune, completely unaware that death was right behind him.

What's this? Second thoughts? More than twenty human lives on his conscience, and that was a month ago. Did that include Mr. Wiesel and his people? Besides, five men had condemned him to death: the doctor, the pastor, Vander May, Father, and Uncle Gerrit—all good men who were risking their lives for the same people that this monster was murdering. And now he had his eye on Mrs. Van Steen's house and on Ada and the Nathans. Maybe that's why he's so happy—that's another ninety guilders!

His bike leaped ahead. He had forgotten the plan. He saw the rabbit face look up, startled, and then Schram began pumping furiously. But John was already on his heels. He heard himself shouting, and Schram swerved aside. Now he was beside him, riding an arm's length away. Carefully gauging the distance, he launched himself at the scrawny figure, tumbling them both onto the grassy shoulder of the road.

He scrambled up and again threw himself on the man, grappling for his arm. He seemed to have forgotten all his judo. Now he had one of Schram's arms and twisted it behind his back. Something hit his foot—a revolver! So Schram had managed to get his hand on it. He kicked it to William, who was dancing around them, not sure what to do.

"Grab it!" shouted John. "Grab it! It's right by your foot!"

Slowly William picked up the revolver, and slowly he raised it . . .

It was done. The body lay on the edge of the road. John felt as though he were moving in a dream, but he knew precisely what he had to do. First check the road. No one. Hide the bikes in the bushes. Three of them? Where did the extra bike come from? Of course. They had already dragged the body into the trees. He followed the drag marks, erasing them with his foot and kicking the pine needles back over the marks.

"William, what . . .," he said.

"Don't fall apart now, man!" William pleaded.

Fall apart? He knew exactly what he was supposed to do. Why should he fall apart? They took the bike to the canal, and when the coast was clear, they flipped it over the side. A shame really! It was a fine bike. Then followed the long ride home. He remembered that part.

Later he remembered that Father had sat beside him on the bed holding his hand, and he had asked, "He was a murderer, wasn't he, Dad? For thirty guilders . . ."

"Yes, he was a murderer!"

"And it's war."

"Yes, John, it's war."

"And we're soldiers?"

"Yes, we're soldiers, son."

"For not our own cause did we choose. We march with Him . . . how did it go? We march with Him who has no shoes."

"Yes, John, you're a fine soldier, but—God forgive me!—you're also my boy, my Johnny-boy!"

Johnny-boy. Father hadn't called him that for a long time. And then he was sobbing.

Did he remember right? Had Father wept too?

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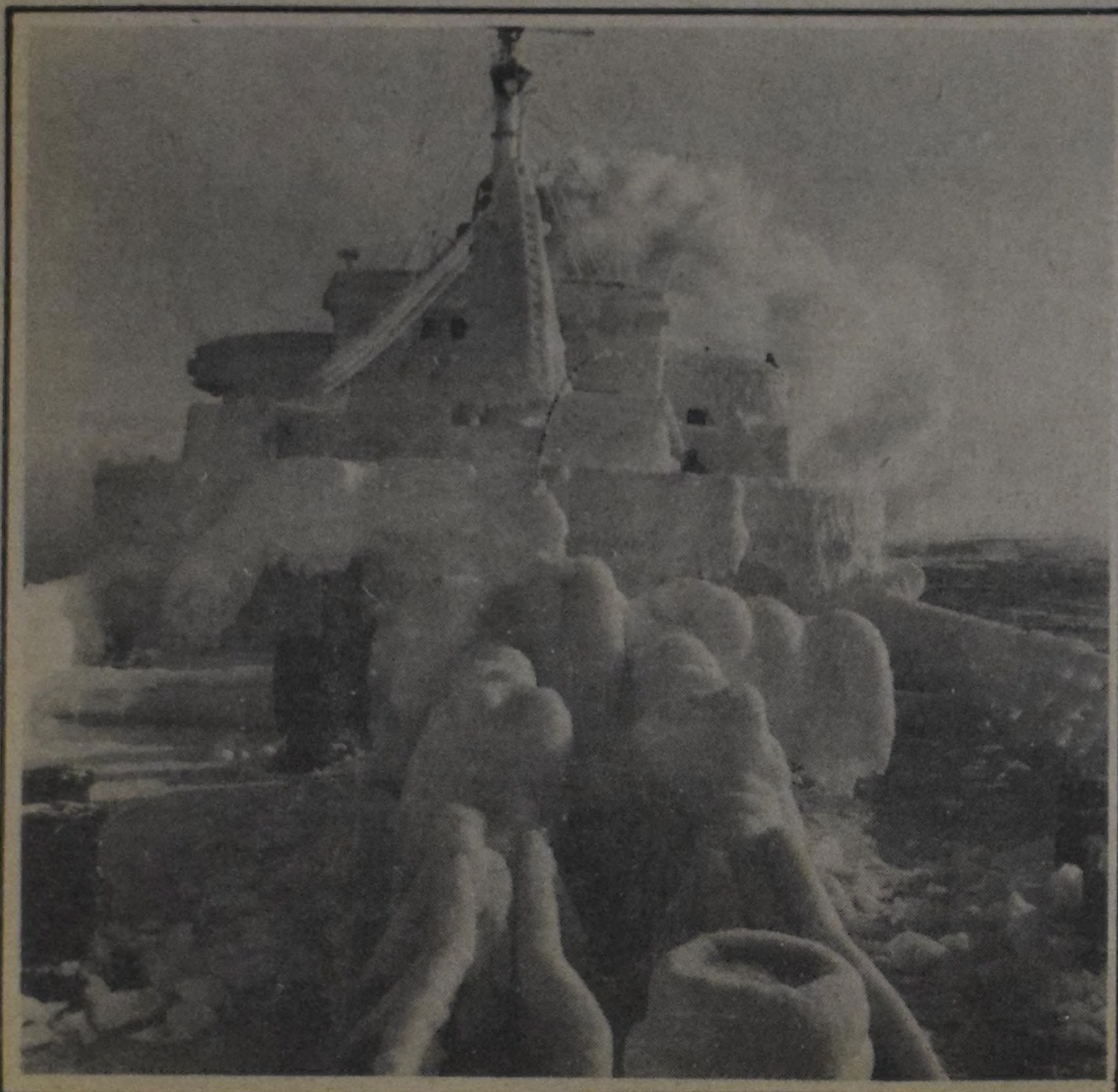
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A Christmas story by Ineke Parlevliet

The Lost Bet



Steve Wadden stood at the railing of "The Princess of Asia" watching the quickly disappearing lights of Vancouver Island. The lighthouse at the tip of the island sent its beams at regular intervals over land and sea and then that, too, was gone and darkness engulfed the lonely man on the deck.

There were no stars. Dark, low-hanging clouds shortened the distance to the horizon and seemed to become one with the gloomy waves. A light drizzle was steadily falling and chilled Steve to the bone. With an impatient gesture he flicked his lighted cigarette overboard. The wind which had suddenly sprang up caught the tiny spark for a single moment; then it disappeared into the turbulent waves. Steve watched it go and his eyes went once more into the direction of Vancouver Island, now completely covered by the darkness of the late evening. Behind it was Vancouver, the city which had given him so much fun and entertainment during the last two weeks.

Cheryl was there, probably sitting in "The Merry Merchant" with another sailor from another boat. The thought did not bother him. They had not been in love with each other and the last thing which would've entered their minds was to remain faithful to each other. He could easily forget her. It was not that. It was just that at this moment the thousands of miles of monotonous Pacific Ocean could not compete with the glitter and festive mood of the big city.

Just a couple of days away from Christmas! If they only could've spent Christmas on shore! The whole crew had hoped for it, but for personal reasons the Captain had been in a rush to get away. His reasons weren't hard to guess though. The Christmas spirit had taken hold of the sailors and officers alike and the drinking and fun-making on shore had exceeded its normal limits. Money had dwindled away like butter on a hot knife. He, too, had spent much more than he wanted to. But then: You only lived once. Life was a rather miserable state

of affairs and you might as well live it up when the opportunity is there. Work, pay check, fun, food and drinks, and then work again, closing the vicious circle. That was all life had to offer; for the rest it was loneliness, discontent, and for a lot of people plain hardship. At times he'd just wished that it was all over. Dead is dead and whether you were buried in soil or found a grave on the bottom of the ocean, it made no difference. It was the end. Forever. A rather hopeless thought. In one way depressing and yet in another a relief ... at least that was what he told himself

Now they were on their way to Japan, bringing wheat from the prairies. Everything had been in a rush. The Captain had supervised the loading of the new cargo with an urgency as if half of the Japanese population would starve within days if the grain wasn't shipped at once. Everything had gone as smoothly as a glass of cold beer down a thirsty throat: No strike of the dockworkers had delayed the loading; no sailors had jumped the ship to stay with their sweethearts, no gale had forced the Princess to remain in the protected harbour.

What bad luck! Strikes and storms were usually a nuisance, now most of the crew would've welcomed either one with open arms The only one who really seemed pleased was the Captain, he had been his own self: aloof, stern, authoritative and hard to communicate with. All the rest had been rather grumpy and short-tempered when the ropes which tied the ship to the wharf, had been hauled in and the anchor was lifted. "Goodbye Vancouver! It may be ages before I will see you again," Steve thought. With a tramper like "The Princess" you were never sure what your next destination would be.

Nevertheless the ship was his home, especially since his mother had died four years ago and his father had gone to live with his sister. Steve was rather fond of his ship. He liked the smooth line of "The Princess" and her sleek, slim bow which cut the waves as

gracefully as a true aristocrat in spite of her 12,000 tons. The ship had verve and buoyancy as a young, lively girl and could skip the waves as if she were taking part in a waterballet to the music of Tchaikovsky. Yet she had one streak against her: she was a roller, easily lured by the whimsical caprices of the turbulent waves. Especially with heavy seas she lurched vehemently from starboard to port, which required a well-balanced loading of the cargo. A shifting cargo in a ship like "The Princess" could have disastrous consequences. Yet deep down, the ship was reliable and had more guts and stamina than her capricious moods indicated at times..

Steve turned around. The outside lights made misty pools of yellow on the shiny wet deck. Slate-grey smoke escaped the two red-ribboned smoke stacks which was accompanied by melancholic hoots. With his long strident seaman's legs Steve walked against the increasing wind towards the after-deck. When he rounded the corner the wind took him by surprise and cut off his breath. The waves were splashing against the bow, sending up a high spray of salty water. He walked back along the starboard side, blown ahead by the wind in his back, forcing him to take quick, little steps. He opened the heavy wooden door with difficulty and went inside, shaking the rain off his jacket like a dog does its coat. He walked down the stairs, holding on tightly to the rail and entered the messroom.

The room was pleasant and cosy with its dark panelled walls, olive green chairs, round teak tables on which Mrs. MacDonald, the stewardess, had ingeniously fastened little bouquets of dried flowers, which she had collected herself in places wherever "The Princess" had chosen to harbour. At one table the purser with three officers were playing cards. He looked up when he saw Steve coming in.

"Some nasty weather knocking about, Steve?"

Steve shrugged his shoulders. "Not really. Just the usual drizzle and a bit of wind. Won't develop into anything worse, I guess."

The purser nodded in agreement and Steve sat down at another table where the chief mate and second engineer were talking together. Mrs. Mac came in with a pot of coffee and some cups on a tray, balancing it carefully against the rolling of the ship.

"You like some coffee, too," Mr. Madden?, she asked.

"Yes, please," Steve answered. "I'm as cold as an arctic char."

Mrs. Mac poured the coffee expertly, her kind, apple-cheeked face frowned with concentration.

She was a plump, heavy-set woman in her mid-forties. For many years a widow she had raised her two children alone, but now that both were married she finally did what she had always wanted to do: To sail a ship and see the world. She did not have the financial means to afford this luxury, so she had happily applied for and received the position as stewardess on "The Princess of Asia." She was a woman with much common sense, hard working, reliable and honest. Above all she was warm-hearted and added more than a touch of motherly concern for the

people around her.

She sewed on buttons for the officers, mended socks for the deckhands, brewed magic working hot drinks for colds, bandaged wounds and blisters with knowledge and comforting words, and also knew exactly which young Filipino boy, who was making his first trip, was homesick for his mother and native land. Then, looking with genuine interest at his pictures of his family and asking questions about his parents and siblings, she chased the spook of homesickness away and kept a close watch for its eventual return. She urged the young sailors to leave some of their money in her custody before they would leave the ship for a celebration at shore. And the ones who did were forever grateful for her insight and help. All the crew members, officers and deckhands alike respected and loved her.

Steve sometimes wondered why she was always cheerful, always kind. Wasn't she ever lonely? Or was she, but never showed it?

She now set Steve's coffee on the table.

"Here you are, Sir"

Steve took the cup in his hands and tilted it almost automatically against the roll of the ship to prevent spilling. Then his attention was drawn by what the chief was saying.

"... it was no less than a miracle! Imagine, falling from a fifth floor and not even breaking one bone or being hurt! I still can't believe it.... When I try to visualize what happened, my brain just seems to stop functioning."

"What happened?" Steve asked curiously, as it was very unusual for the first mate to be so talkative.

"A while ago I got a radio call from my wife in Glasgow. She told me that our little boy, this afternoon, had fallen off our fifth floor balcony. He just turned four last week. He climbs on everything.... Humanly speaking he should've been dead, but he fell right on top of a couch which was standing at the curb to be picked up by the garbage man. Nothing wrong with him ... not a scratch ... it is unbelievable ... my wife was still half dazed."

A sudden heavy roll of the ship spilled most of the chief's coffee on the saucer, but he didn't notice it, his mind too occupied with the miracle that had saved his son's life.

"Well, I guess his guardian angel did a good job," the second engineer said, filling a pipe. "I honestly believe in those angels, going by the crazy luck some people have."

Steve gave a short, almost cynical laugh. "You believe in angels, John? That's the latest! I thought you were an evolution fan like I am, but where in the heck are you going to fit guardian angels if the one species brings forth a higher one? Do they fit between the monkeys and us or do they come after us?"

The second engineer, a light-hearted chap whose philosophy consisted of "enjoy life to the fullest, but don't wreck your brains about unsolvable mysteries and problems as life was too short for that", shrugged his shoulders.

"Where angels fit? I haven't a clue. But there must be something.... Something which we can't explain. We

Continued on next page

The lost bet

all know that there are missing links. Mother nature must have had a helper when this world began and I guess she still has. What do you think, chief?"

The chief had poured the spilled coffee back into his cup and was now drinking it slowly, holding the cup with both hands. He was a quiet, rather stern man, but solid and fair. The pictures of his wife and four children were decorating the walls of his cabin and it was not difficult to discern the man's mutual love for his family and the sea, which pulled at his heart in opposite directions.

"I'm not a religious man in the sense that I go to church or make it a habit to pray," he said thoughtfully. Yet I am convinced that there is more to life than we can explain.... I believe in some sort of Higher Being, who is in control of things. Call Him God, if you like. I have never been a convinced agnostic, nor do I believe in evolution. Too many missing links, as John said. But one thing I can tell you. This night I said thanks to whatever God there is...." He pointed with the now empty coffee cup in his hands towards the ceiling.

"But that's nonsense!" Steve exclaimed. "Your boy was just lucky. Darned lucky, I agree, but this doesn't prove the existence of a God! Luck and fate. That's all there is. Those are the gods we live by. No one has ever seen God and no one ever will. If there were a God, a God of love as some fools claim, than He'd better do something about the misery in this world. It's a big mess. No one can deny that. And if there is a God I would hate Him, because if He has the power to do something about the rottenness around us, the sick and hungry and the people caught in wars and calamities and He doesn't do anything about it, then He is more to be blamed than anyone else. But I don't have to hate Him, for He does not exist. He's like a Fata Morgana: An illusion of hope. Not a reality. Poor people, who believe in Him!"

"I believe in Him and I call myself rich," a voice suddenly said. It was Mrs. Mac's. Nobody had seen her leave the room and come back from the kitchen with a plate of sandwiches. She had overheard the last part of the conversation. She put the plate on the table and steadied herself against an empty chair as a new roll of the ship was challenging her balance.

The three men looked at her, taken by surprise.

"You believe in a God?", Steve asked, "A God of love?"

"Yes, I do," she answered simply.

"Well, if your God exists, then He must have been unemployed for a long, long time," Steve said. "Why doesn't He do something about the misery in this world?"

"Why don't you do something about it, Mr. Madden?" The tone of her voice remained friendly, but there was an unfamiliar urgency in it.

"Me, you must be kidding! I didn't create it. I am not God!"

The second engineer puffed smoke rings into the room and followed the new course of the conversation with interest. The chief sat quietly, but his eyes went from Steve to Mrs. Mac and visa versa. He still held the coffee cup in one hand. He now looked expectantly at Mrs. Mac.

"You're wrong, Mr. Madden," she

said. "We all created this mess around us. You and I and every human being, dead and alive. God didn't do it. On the contrary. If we could love as perfectly as God, we would already be in Paradise today. But the fact that so many people and children are living in hell here on earth is our fault, our selfishness, our sin. If God didn't love us and hadn't sent His Son to die on the cross, we wouldn't have a leg to stand on and we would be totally lost. Forever."

"Dear Mrs. Mac," Steve said indulgently, as if he were speaking to an ignorant child. "I respect your conviction, but please, don't try to convert me. I am 28 years old and I've met many people who call themselves Christians, but to be very frank, you're the first one I've met who acts like one.... For the rest I have never seen one, which proves to me that there is no God. It's only a matter of brain-washing."

Mrs. Mac looked at Steve with a mingled expression of compassion and sadness.

"I am 48 years old, Mr. Madden, and I have known God since my childhood, but He only came fully alive for me when my husband died so young. Without God I could not have made it. Your problem is that you confuse the issues. You judge God by what you see around you and then of course there can't be a place for God. But it is the other way around: God will judge us for what this world has come to and if it weren't for His grace, we all would be lost. You have a chip on your shoulder, Mr. Madden. I don't know what it is, but you know. It is none of my business either, but it is my business to tell you that whatever that chip on your shoulder is, it blocks the way to see God. For He is there. I know He is."

The four card players had stopped playing and now followed the conversation. No one interfered or injected.

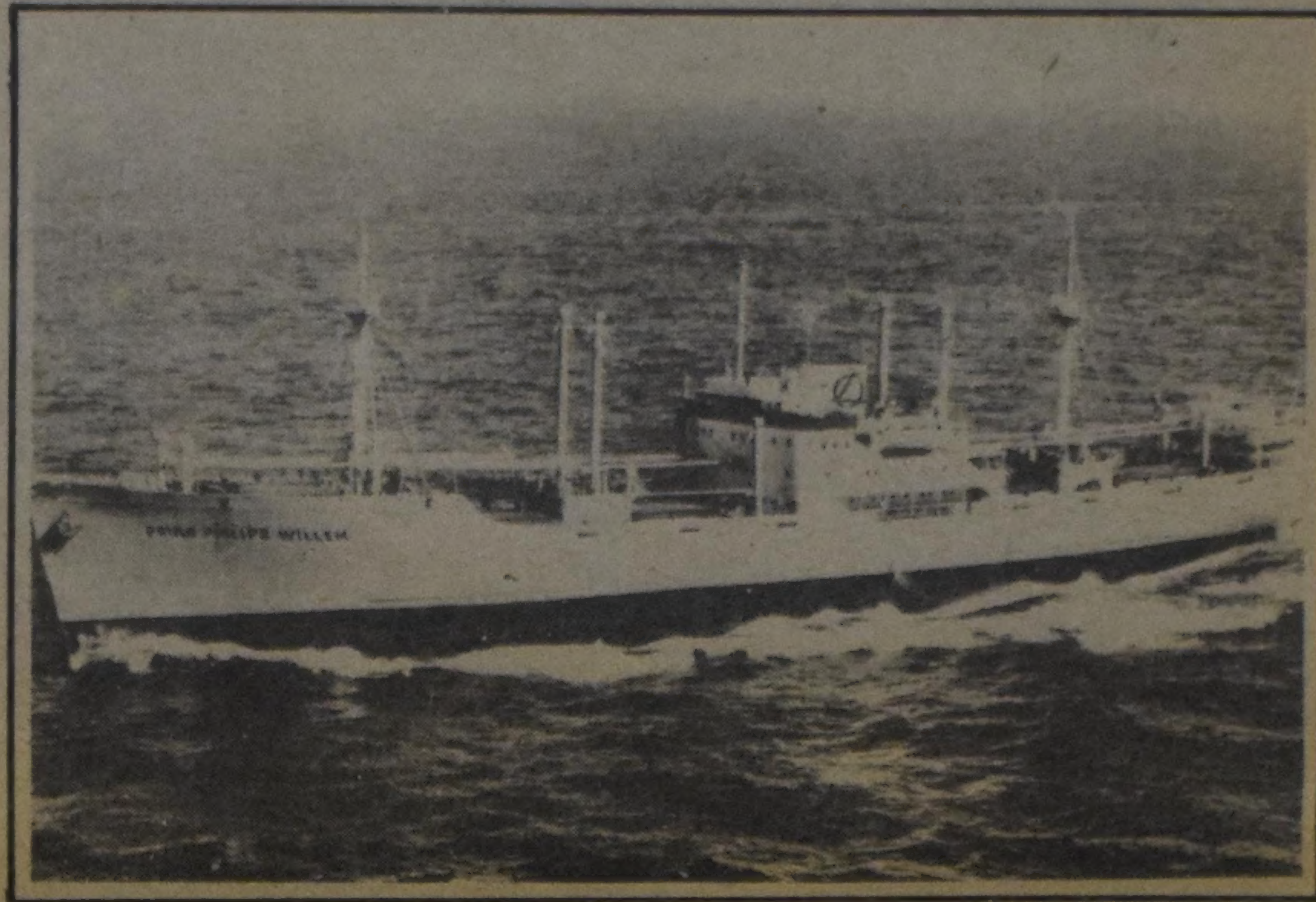
Steve felt all eyes upon him which made him even more uncomfortable. Mrs. Mac had shot right into the bull's eye. He had a chip on his shoulder, but how did she know? He wanted to forget that. She had no right to confront him with the past. That was done and over with. In order to justify himself, he became more defiant, bolder.

"I tell you what, Mrs. Mac. Let's have a bet. You seem to be so sure that there is a God — a God who is love on top of that — while I am convinced that there is none, that one of us must be wrong! So let's see what your God has to say about that. If you can prove to me that He exists, I will believe in Him. How's that? I bet you can't! What do you say?"

It had become very quiet in the room. One by one the bridge players had put their cards on the table. The Chief had put his cup down and kept his eyes fixed on Mrs. Mac. The Second Engineer leaned back in his chair with an amused smile on his face. He always enjoyed this kind of dialogue, especially if one party got into a tight squeeze. First it had seemed that Steve was in a predicament. The chap's face had shown some emotion. Goodlooking feller with his steel-blue eyes and dark hair. A boy, women easily fell over, but rather arrogant. A chip on his shoulder? Well, maybe. Who knows. He certain-

ly wasn't the cheery type. Cynical and defiant, yes. And sure of himself, at least trying hard to give that impression. At the same time a frustrated character, who now had driven dear old Mac into the corner.

He looked at her expectantly. What would she have to say about Steve's silly proposal for a bet? A bet if there was a God, yes or no. There was no proof either way. Stupid business. Yet when he looked at the stewardess he was struck by the serenity of her face.



ly betrayed no anxiety or perplexity. No, she was not concerned. That was obvious. They all looked at her, waiting what her answer to Steve would be. But she remained quiet, her hands now folded together in front of her. She seemed to gaze at a certain point in the room, apparently oblivious of the people around her. No one spoke, no one dared to break the eerie silence which had crept into the room.

Steve wished he was out of the room, out of this crazy bet business. He had been carried away with his own arguments. Why did he have to drag that good woman into his personal affairs? There was no God and never would Mrs. Mac be able to prove otherwise. Rather cheap trick of him, that bet. He felt ashamed. Let's forget the whole business, he wanted to say, but no sound came over his lips. Suddenly his heart started to pound. This was no silly children's game, not in Mrs. Mac's eyes. She took it seriously. Very seriously. Her folded hands said so, her strange stare, the alert look in her eyes as if she were communicating with some one not in the room. With a shock Steve realized that it was too late to back out. The bet was on and even before Mrs. Mac started to speak, he wasn't so sure anymore that he would win.

At last Mrs. Mac seemed to come back to reality. She looked directly at Steve, her face calm, her voice steady, but kind.

"No, I can't prove to you that there is a God," she said. "God doesn't need me for that, but He will reveal Himself to you. I don't know how and I don't know when. But He will show you that He is there." And then adding very softly: "And He will show you that He is a God of love...."

The words still seemed to hang in the air when they filed out of the room. The sandwiches remained untouched

on the table, forgotten. They zig-zagged across the rimmed table-top with the roll of the ship, like a rudderless dinghy on a wavy lake.

...

Steve lay in bed, unable to sleep. His mind was a ferris wheel of thoughts, spinning by so fast that it was difficult to analyze them. Fragments of the conversation with Mrs. Mac came back to him over and over again. ... you have a chip on your

shoulder, Mr. Madden ... your problem is that you confuse the issues ... God will judge us for what this world has come to.... There is a God ... I know He is ... A God of love

Steve closed his eyes. A chip on his shoulder He didn't want to think about it. It was past. Done and over with. Forgotten. Forgotten? No ... It was not. It had been buried deep in his heart, but it was still there. Mrs. Mac had seen and recognized it for what it was: A chip on his shoulders. Steve pressed his eyes together, but it didn't help.

The face was there. Jenny's, the girl in England, whom he once dated. The soft brown eyes, the long smooth auburn hair, the sensitive mouth, her little sigh: "Oh, I love you so much, Steve...." Then that awful night when he had not been able to control himself. She had cried afterwards. "We should've waited till we were married...." She had not blamed him. She had only blamed herself. They had parted. He had to go back to the School of Navigation, thirty miles away. Her letters had come several times a week, expressing her guilt about what had happened, and her fear.... Then the phone call. She was pregnant. He remembered his own reaction. He had been furious. What a fate! Only once he had slept with her ...! She should've been smarter ... He did not want to marry her. They were too young. He wanted to finish school and start a career at sea. You don't start with a wife and child trailing behind you.

An abortion. He would pay. Naturally. She had been shocked. No, never, never. She could not murder her baby.... That was her stupid Christian upbringing. Everything was black and white in her family. This was right and that was wrong. No understanding, no compassion, no two sides of a story, ever.

The lost bet

He had been lucky. A week later he had to sail. His first trip. They still wrote to each other, but there was no longer a mentioning of marriage. She had left home and was now working as a mother's helper in a family with six children. She could stay there with her baby too, when it was born. She didn't have to write that her parents had rejected her. He wrote her back, an empty letter, except for some paper money. He had been back at school many months later when he received her last letter.

The baby was born, a little girl, very beautiful with his dark hair, but her eyes. She had called it Esther. She was happy. She knew that God had forgiven her. He had not had the guts to answer her.... He had gone back to sea and when he came back again, still with a guilty conscience, he had phoned the address which she given him, but was told that the family Coons was no longer living there. They had immigrated to the USA or Canada. They weren't sure. No, about a girl with a baby, they didn't know a thing. So he had lost Jenny. For a while the nasty thought kept nagging at him that he should call her parents. He kept postponing it until the nagging stopped and with a firm resolution he buried the whole episode deep down in his heart. To forget it.... it is the other way around, Mr. Madden. God will judge us for what this world has come to ... you confuse the issues....

Steve got out of bed, dressed and climbed to the upper deck. The wind whistled around him and the rain slashed in his face: "That was a rotten trick, wasn't it, Steve?", they seemed to howl. "Of course you don't want to believe in God. For if there is no God, you don't have to be afraid of His judgment either...." between the roaring of the wind and waves came that voice "...whatever that chip on your shoulder is, it blocks the way to God...."

Steve pressed his hands against his ears. "Stop! Stop!" he yelled in the threatening darkness. "Leave me alone!" But it was too late. In his arrogance and self-assurance he had made a bet ... had pulled the trigger. God was going to get him now. All those years He had been waiting patiently for him like a cat lying in wait for a mouse. Now God was going to get even with him. Finally the time had come and he had set the alarm off....

The darkness around him was like a heavy, choking blanket; the hostile waves beckoned at him: Why don't you jump? Dead is dead! It makes no difference where you find your grave, in the soil or with us at the bottom of the ocean.

With sardonic pleasure, wave after wave pounded the ship, repeating their invitation. Jump! But he didn't dare. With sudden insight Steve knew that it would be the end. At the bottom of the ocean or wherever he would die, a Judge would be waiting for him and Steve was scared, scared to death.

A voice, soft and assuring tried to get through to him: "He will show you that He is a God of love....", but it got lost among the thundering waves and shrieking wind before it could reach the desperate man.

With his arms crossed on the rail and his head resting upon it, Steve cried like a baby. Mingled with his

guilt-feelings with a gnawing sense of remorse which had been eating at his heart all those many years, while he had refused to recognize its truth: He had loved Jenny and someone else never could take her place. His selfishness and cowardice had ruined his own life. "Jenny, Jenny," he cried, but the only answer he received was given simultaneously by wind and waves, "too late, too late...."

Again tossing and turning in his bed, Steve could not sleep. The monotonous droning of the ship's machines echoed the accusations of the elements outside. Then suddenly Steve sat up straight. Something was wrong. He listened with his trained sailor's ears. Then he knew: The ship was quiet. The regular stamping of the machines had stopped. It felt as if the ship was dead.

The boiler had sprung a leak and the "Princess of Asia" had to be towed back to Vancouver. For Steve it was a bad omen. The Judge was already waiting for him.... Pacific nor Metropolitan Vancouver would be big enough to hide him.

It was Christmas morning and the captain had given the order that no one was permitted to leave the ship until further notice. Soon the reason was made known. Some church minister would come aboard with Christmas gifts made by children of different churches. The mess room which had already been decorated with a small Christmas tree and ivy — due to the foresight of Mrs. Mac—was now being prepared for the reception of the minister and his helpers.

Cakes and coffee appeared on long tables, and chairs were placed in a circle around it as the church minister first wanted to give his Christmas message. The whole crew was assembled in their best clothes when the Captain introduced the minister and the four people with him. Piled up boxes with wrapped presents were brought in, and waited in a corner to be handed out. The crew became excited. They had never experienced such a treat before. Kids caring enough for seamen to buy or make them a present, whatever it might be. So often you got the feeling at sea that you were alone in the world, alone with the elements; far removed from family and friends, from the coziness of a living room, filled with the laughter of children. Children, precious friends of lonely seamen, regardless where the ship harboured.... Foreign, unknown children, who always waved at a passing ship or yelled a welcome greeting in a new harbour.

The crew felt moved. The minister spoke. He spoke about the children in general and then about the One Child in particular, the Christmas Child, the Christ Child, whose birth was celebrated today. The Child who had come to bring new hope, new life to a world stooped down in sin. The Child, sent by a Father of Love....

Steve listened. His face betrayed no emotion. He was not touched like the others. Whatever that minister said, it was not for him. God had no love for him, not for a rotten apple like he was. God would come with a bill: Time to pay, boy. You've had plenty of time, but now I've caught up with you....

He accepted his parcel with a polite

smile. Some kid had sent him a christmas gift! The irony of it all! He stood with it in his hands, feeling awkward, not knowing what to do with it. The best thing would be to throw it over the railing, but he wouldn't have the guts to do that, coward as he was.

All the parcels were handed out; coffee was poured and Mrs. Mac made sure that not only the visitors and the officers but the deckhands and sailors as well got their share of the cook's pastry. "Merry Christmas!" The mess room buzzed with laughter, good wishes and was blue with the cigarette smoke. Not one sailor opened his present. They all wanted to do this in the privacy of their own cabin or sleeping quarters. Shyness and nostalgia for their own families or loved ones, combined with the touching gesture of the children had made their eyes watery and produced a lump in many a throat.

Steve, too, went to his cabin. He put the parcel on a chair. He was not going to open it. He didn't want to have any part of it. He would go ashore. Find Cheryl. Have some fun. But he did not go. He poured himself a drink and sat down. He smoked, inhaling deeply, lighting one cigarette after the other. The gift on the chair seemed to glare at him, seemed to challenge him. "Open me if you dare...." Steve bit his lips. The cigarette in his hand trembled. He did not want that parcel. It was not for him. It was all a mistake. He was not worthy of it. He poured himself another drink and suddenly he grabbed his jacket which he had taken off and threw it at the parcel to hide it from view, but he missed and it fell with a dull thud on the floor. It was as if a child was crying. There was nothing defiant any more about the small parcel on the carpet; the challenge was gone. It was just a wrapped present from some child. That was all. Why be afraid of it? What the heck, he still had the guts to open a Christmas gift, didn't he? It wasn't a time bomb! He was just a sentimental jerk, put out of balance by some old, stale guilt feelings. Well, he would show who the real Steve was! Second Mate on "The Princess of Asia," climbing the ladder of becoming First and later on Captain Madden himself. Just give him time....

Steve picked up the present. Carelessly he tore off the ribbon and the paper. He opened a small box. A closed card on top, a pair of navy blue socks, a comb, a pocketbook, and a leather wallet. Steve eyed the socks. They would fit. Good. The wallet was nice. Not a cheap gift either. Now the card. With his tobacco stained fingers he ripped open the envelope. Something fell on the ground. It was a real Christian card, complete with a church and Bible text. "And God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...."

Steve opened the card. In a childish, inexperienced handwriting several lines were written under the printed Christmas greeting and the writing continued on the back page. Steve's eyes flew over the words. Suddenly he felt dizzy and sick, his face was drained of blood. Someone had knocked him over, had given him a blow right between the eyes. A child....

Steve fell down on his bed, his trembling hands holding the card,

reading it again, turning it over, still not believing what he had read.

"Dear Sailor", the card read.

"How are you? I am fine. I hope you have a nice Christmas. It is Jesus' birthday. I like to send you His birthday card. I like sailors. My Mommy says that my father is a sailor, but I don't know him. He left a long time ago but my Mommy says that he will come back, for she is always praying for him. I hope he will. If you see him will you ask him to come home? He has dark hair and blue eyes and his name is Steve. I only know him from a picture Mommy has. I love him a lot ... I like you too. Love from Esther Laglin, 543 East Street, Burnaby, B.C."

It could not be ... Impossible.... Steve sat motionless, as if there was no life left in him. Only a dull throbbing in his head repeated over and over again: It is impossible ... impossible.

He did not know how long he had been sitting there. Suddenly his eyes caught a small piece of cardboard on the ground. He picked it up and looked straight into the eyes of Jenny, a young Jenny, Jenny as a seven year old school girl. Only the hair was different. It was dark and wavy. Strange. Then he knew. The photo was not Jenny, but Esther. His own daughter. The daughter he had not wanted, the daughter whom he had wanted to get rid of, the daughter who loved him.

Steve cried, sobbing incoherently with his fists in his eyes to suppress his tears, but they kept on coming. He didn't notice how his cabin door was opened and then quickly was closed again. He did not hear Mrs. Mac's footsteps retreating from his door. Steve cried. Tears of guilt, shame and remorse washed his soul until it was clean and an abundant feeling of relief and joy took its place.

Later on he treasured his gifts. In the socks he found a little note: "Mommy knitted them. She hopes they will fit." He put Esther's picture in his new wallet. And there was the pocketbook yet which he had not given a chance. Now he read its title: "The greatest is Love." Slowly he opened it. He tried to read some verses, but the words danced in front of his eyes, which were misted over again. But there was a voice, coming from nowhere, yet very clear, very convincing: "God will reveal Himself to you and He will show you that He is a God of love."

"You won, God," Steve whispered. "Mrs. Mac couldn't prove you, but she knew you could and she trusted You enough that You would do it too. I believe You are there... YOU ARE THERE! The enormity of this statement finally dawned on Steve in all its intensity. God was there and Jenny and Esther.... The joy leapt at him as a welcoming dog after a long absence of his master. His Christmas present was not just a letter and a few material things, but the lease for a new life, wholesome, meaningful.

A minute later he sprang to his feet. He had to see Mrs. Mac. He had to tell her before she would leave the ship that he had lost the bet! What a way to lose! And then he had to call Burnaby, wherever that was.

PASTORAL COUNSELLING

Holiday cheer

Rev. Heynen is retired chaplain at Pine Rest Christian Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

About a block from our temporary home in Florida, is what is claimed to be the world's tallest Christmas tree. The tree was a gift from the state of Oregon to the state of Florida. It was shipped by rail and especially packed to prevent it from freezing in the cold of the mountain passes. It's a tall pine tree — a thing of beauty in itself. Added to this are the countless lights and the tinsel and the trimmings and a huge star at its lofty top. People drive considerable distances to get a glimpse of it or to take pictures of this magnificent symbol of the evergreen life that has been brought by our Savior into this world.

It speaks of the spirit of the holiday season. It's a greeting to all who pass by telling of the hope and cheer of Christmas to a world that is filled with materialism and a desire for outward splendor. The holiday season from Thanksgiving through New Years is theoretically a time of family togetherness, of love, of giving, of reunion, of joy. The coming of the Savior should still be a time of great joy for all people. Possibly for some people it is all of these things.

It's a jolly time for them but for others it is an unendurable time of the year. It is during this season that the rate of suicides takes an alarming

jump. When all of Christendom celebrates the birth of one who brings life, there are those who contemplate ending it all. I've frequently heard people say, even though they weren't so depressed, "I'm glad the holiday season is over again, the children are back at school and all the celebration and all the gifts are past." It gives us an indication of the way we celebrate our holidays. It's commercialized to such an extent that it is a money making affair.

On the other hand there are people who celebrate it in a more modest way in their homes with their families, and feel the warmth of being together or feeling the love that should be found in a family get-together. But then there are the lonely ones, the elderly people who have little to look forward to, sitting in their little apartment, boarding house or nursing home. They feel the loneliness, the uselessness of life in a new way when they hear the songs of Christmas and see the tinsel and the lights.

I read of a chaplain in a prison who said that at Christmas time many of the men become sullen, angry and deeply depressed. Many don't look forward to Christmas and New Year's celebrations because it's that time when life doesn't have that much meaning for them. They hear the carols on their radio but they sound rather empty, they see the ads in the paper but that's not for them, the announcements about Christmas giv-

ing and Christmas gifts seem empty. Many will sit in their rooms on Christmas day or on their favorite park bench and just look out at the passing parade. So, it is not so surprising that the rate of suicides go up at that time of the year. It is true that young people who haven't found much meaning in life will do this, but it is particularly prominent among older people. In our vicinity here, an elderly couple had made arrangements to commit suicide together. Both of them were nearly eighty, both were quite sick, so they made a pact to take their own lives. Fortunately, it was prevented. But this points out the fact that Christmas means many things to many people and for many people it is not a time of holiday cheer but of holiday blues.

I think when you look at the situation in our country this year, there isn't a great deal of that spirit. There are a number of people who have lost their employment, they don't have a source of income. The other Sunday a man was walking out of church and he mentioned some of the things that I had said that had been particularly meaningful to him and with tears in his eyes he said, "I lost my job this week, I don't see much chance in getting another one, at least not before Christmas" and he said it was going to be an awfully bleak Christmas because they wouldn't have money to buy gifts for their children or gifts for each other." I think, however, when you look at all of this you begin to realize

that we are laying too much emphasis on the externals of Christmas. We make so much of the tinsel, the lavishly wrapped packages, too much rich food and drink, we cover up the real heart of the season. The trinkets and the gifts that we buy at Christmas are soon broken and forgotten and they do not have a real value.

The thing that we ought to be concentrating far more on is the spiritual emphasis of this day. If we think of the coming of the Saviour into the world, the beauty of the songs of the angels, if you think why Christ came into the world; this, I think, helps us to see the holiday season as something that can be rich and meaningful because it has a spiritual significance that helps us to celebrate this time of the year in a joyful and confident way.

I would like to suggest this Christmas that you think more in terms of that fact. People will often say to each other, "When are you celebrating your Christmas?" Karl Menninger talks about maturity in a mature person, and he mentions that one of the qualities of a mature person is that they find as much joy in giving as in receiving. I think this is true; there is a genuine sense of cheer, holiday cheer, if we can share it with someone else. That's why a lonely person finds it so hard to celebrate this season of the year because they have no one to share it with and so it becomes important that we share with others.



*"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."
II Corinthians 9:15*

*A blessed
Christmas
from our family
to yours*

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Christmas parcels for seafarers

by Hans Uittenbosch

Rev. Uittenbosch is seaway chaplain in Montreal, Quebec.

But then there is another side to the whole Christmas story: what does it mean to you spiritually? The real joy of Christmas is to think of the Christ as He comes into our hearts and into our lives. We need that more than anything else in our lives. I think particularly in a time when there is so much materialism. We ought to set a pattern for ourselves and for our families to make Christmas an experience which is of a spiritual nature. Make your celebration, if it is with your whole family or a group of families that meet together, something that has spiritual value. If you are willing to share with others, share also some of that Christmas cheer.

I read the other day of a man who spent Christmas in a concentration camp in Germany and he said, "Christmas was like any other day: we had the same thin soup, dry bread, a weak cup of coffee, there was no Christmas music, no Christmas gifts and yet I believe that the star of Bethlehem shone more brightly in our hearts that Christmas than any other Christmas that I can remember."

Christmas doesn't have to be gloomy. Maybe we would have a more joyful Christmas if we would share with others or if we would use the gifts that we have, the joy that we have, in lifting the burden for someone else and in making life just a little bit more bearable for someone else, but above all to allow the Christ as He became man to become the centre of our Christmas celebration.

Every year around this time, thousands of people are busy with a variety of preparations for a festive celebration of the birth of our Lord. Many of them have made it a habit to remember the seafarers in those preparations. And because of that thoughtfulness I become the recipient of hundreds of Christmas parcels for seafarers.

From time to time I run into people who inform me that they continue to have correspondence with the recipient of their parcel. (They had thoughtfully enclosed their name and address on the card in the parcel). The nature of that correspondence is not always known. At times I should think it does not reach much further than the courtesy exchange of best wishes at a time that we are all reminded of the extent to which God went to seek His people in love.

But there is correspondence that goes far beyond a mere exchange of courtesies. It has something to do with being "a living letter."

Of course it has to do with the workings of the Spirit of God in a man's heart as well. It has to do with the power of the Word and the mystery of salvation. But it also has to do with wrapping a Christmas parcel.

A few weeks ago when I was scheduled to make a presentation in

Sarnia and Strathroy, Ont., I received a letter just before I left home.

You would want to know what kind of letter it was:

"Dear Rev. Uittenbosch:

I am a member of the Second Christian Reformed Church in Sarnia, Ontario. Last year I was an advanced member of our Calvinette club. As usual, we sent Christmas gift parcels to you for the Seamen in Montreal. In my parcel I included my return address and a personal letter about what Christmas means to me as a Christian.

I was happy to hear from a Korean man on a Japanese ship who had received my parcel. He is a 26 year old man who is a Korean University graduate. In his letter he expressed his thanks for the gift and said that he would like to become a Christian. He asked me to continue to write to him and to help him know more about God. I felt that it was my duty to continue to write him.

After writing to him several times, I thought that it was important for him to have a Bible in his own language because he said that he didn't have one. I ordered a Korean Bible and I bought a daily devotion book (Just Between God and Me — Sand Drescher) and sent it by airmail to the shipping company in Japan. He was very pleased with the gift.

In the next few letters he wrote to me that he was going to be in the Great Lakes area again. While in the Great Lakes area he called me several times.

Each time he asked me to pray for him while on his voyages and for his everyday life. Well, time went on and in September he came to Detroit, Michigan. He called and asked me if it was possible for me to come to see him. We as a family did everything possible to go to Detroit. We met him at the Greyhound bus station there.

He got permission for us to go onto his ship. He is the 2nd engineer. What an experience! We were given a tour of the ship and the men prepared a snack for us. The service was great!

We were invited into his cabin. It was so nice to see his Bible and devotion book beside his bed. While in his room I was given a special gift. He gave me a hand-crafted Korean doll in a glass case which he had purchased while in Korea in July. This gift showed his thankfulness to me and in the first place to Christ for using me to guide him to learn more about Christ. Now he is on his way back to Japan - Korea.

Well, this is making a long story short, but I am looking forward to meeting you in our church on November 7 and telling you more about this wonderful experience. I feel that this is an experience to share with fellow Christians to encourage them in this evangelism project.

Yours in Christ,
Anita Nyholt

With a letter like this, one should be encouraged, in every way, but certainly when you are wrapping a Christmas parcel for a seafarer.



Our sincere wishes

for a

Blessed Christmas

for you all.

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He came! To give me love to give.
I know my shroud of death is torn—
what could I write, what could I live
if Jesus Christ had not been born?

Jan De Groot
trans. Fred W. Tamminga



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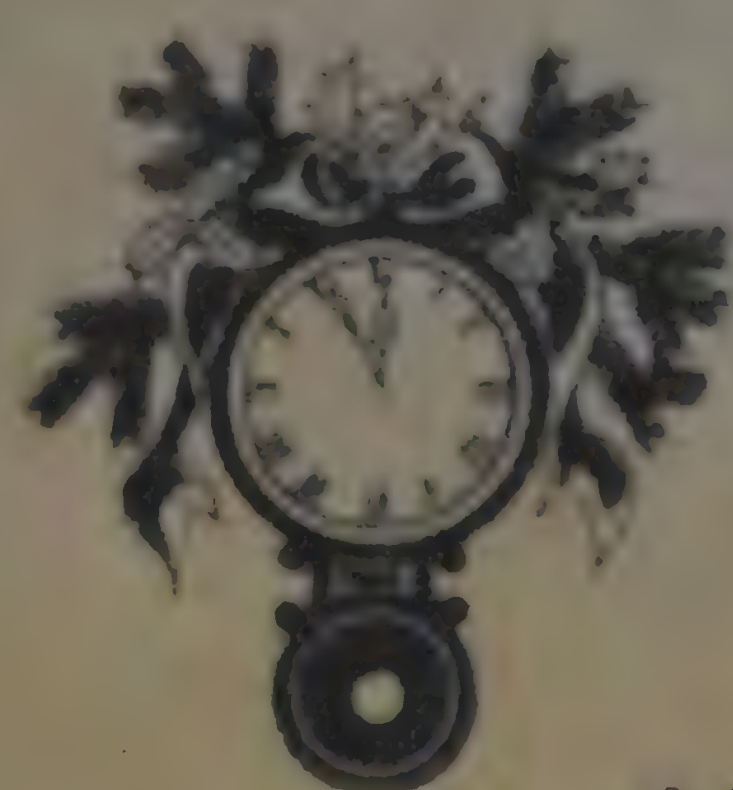


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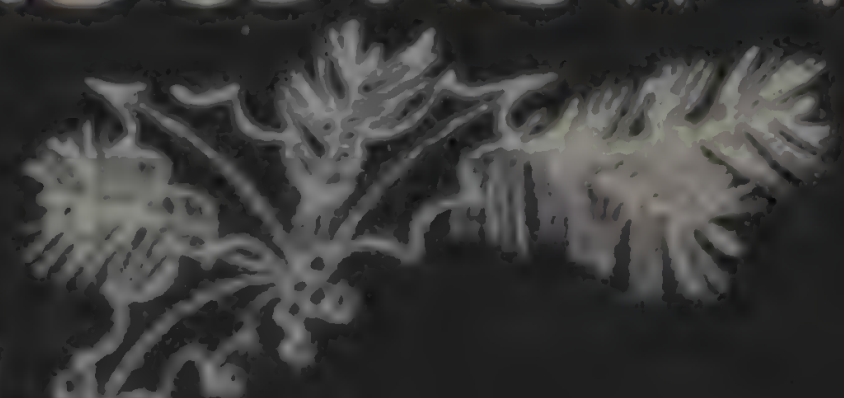
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May this Truth bless your life at
Christmas and always:

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of
grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of
the only Son from the Father. (John 1:14)

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all
creation; for in his all things were created, in heaven
and earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or
dominions or principalities or authorities — all things
were created through him and for him. He is before all
things, and in him all things hold together.

(Col. 1: 15-17)

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CHRISTMAS 1978

Celebrating the birth of Christ — The Christ of the Bible. We pray that
this Christ may be your personal Lord and Saviour. We are blessed that
we have our Reformed Creeds and a rich reformed heritage; a heritage
that has helped us plot an unwavering cause of Christian service.

At times we are deeply dismayed about the fact that this Reformed
perspective and heritage is buffeted and attacked; there seems so much
uncertainty and doubt about where we are going; there are so many
divergent views as to how one serves the Lord from our traditional
reformed basis. Sometimes one almost despairs of reaching any
agreement or consensus.

Is the Bible for all of us still by faith and not by intellect, the infallible
Word of God, whether we can understand it or not, comprehend it or not,
but only believe it because the Bible says so, God Himself says so!

Yes, we wish you a blessed Christmas, and at the same time we urge all of
our friends, acquaintances and business associates to recommit
themselves to the faith of our Fathers, to follow the Lord, to submit to the
Cross and to let the Bible be a "lamp for our feet" and a "light for our
path".

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Season's Greetings

Wij wensen de familie en vrienden een gelukkig Kerstfeest en veel heil en zegen in het nieuwe jaar.
Mr. & Mrs. J. Bouwers, R.R. #2, Brampton, Ont. L6V 1A1.

We would like to wish all relatives and friends a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.
Ralph & Hanna Bouwers, 70 Maple Cres., Orangeville, Ontario.

We wish all our relatives and friends a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.
Anje and Sid Buma, 6 Noelle Dr., St. Catharines, Ont. L2M 1M2.

Clarence and Grace Dam and family would like to wish relatives and friends a blessed Christmas and God's blessing for a happy and prosperous New Year in 1979.

Aan familie, vrienden en bekenden wenst Mrs. O. De Boer Gods zegen toe voor het jaar 1979.
Mrs. A.G. De Boer, 107 Andrew Street N., Exeter, Ont., Hay Post 235. N0M 1W0.

We wish all our relatives and friends a blessed Christmas and may the Lord give you all a blessed New Year.
Harry and Cora De Groot
Jan and Susan De Groot.

We wish all our relatives and friends a blessed Christmas and a New Year of peace and happiness.
Mr. & Mrs. Rudolph DeJong, 1590 Michigan Rd., Sarnia, Ontario.

To all our relatives and friends: We wish you all God's blessing, joy and nearness in the Christmas season and throughout the New Year.
Mr. & Mrs. J. Dekker, Sr., 21 Hazelwood Ave., Grimsby.

We wish for all our children and grandchildren, relatives and friends a blessed Christmas and a happy 1979.
Mr. and Mrs. T. and A. Deelstra, 586 Superior St., Wyoming, Ont.

To family and friends we hereby extend our best wishes for the Christmas season and for the coming New Year.
Harry and Erna de Vries, Hamilton, Ontario.

We wish all our friends and relatives the joys and blessings of Christmas and God's guidance throughout 1978.
Wim en Truus DeVries, 493 West 5th, Hamilton, Ont.

Wij wensen aan familie en vrienden gezellige Kerstdagen en een gezegend Nieuwjaar.
Mr. & Mrs. W. De Vries, 2 White St., Apt. 111, St. Catharines.

All our relatives and friends best wishes for the season.
Karel and Eve, Margaret and Annette Fleurke, 3058 Centennial Drive, Burlington, Ont.

Wij wensen al onze familie, vrienden en bekenden gezegende Kerstdagen en een voorspoedig Nieuwjaar.
Mr. en Mrs. K. Fluitt, York.

Wij wensen familie en vrienden een gezegend Kerstfeest en een gelukkig Nieuwjaar.
Hartelijke groeten, John en Nelly Guetter, Clinton.

Mr. and Mrs. W.R. Haan, Whitby, Ont., wish all family and friends a blessed Christmas and New Year.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hamstra wish family and friends a very blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year.
281 Queens St. S., Hamilton L8P 3T4.

To all our relatives and friends the best wishes and the Lord's blessing for Christmas and the New Year.
Tim and Anna Hessels and family, Wellandport, Ont.

Wick and Henny Heuving and family wish all their relatives, friends, and acquaintances, far and near, a blessed Christmas, and a very happy and prosperous New Year. May the Lord bless you all.
R.R. #4, Simcoe, Ont.

Mr. and Mrs. S. Hiemstra wish all their relatives and friends a blessed and happy Christmas and New Year.
307-512 Canonberry Crt., Oshawa, Ont., L1C 2Y2.

Wishing all our relatives and friends a blessed Christmas and we hope the Lord will sustain and bless you in the coming year.
Gre and Frans Hofland Sr., 1401 Lorne Park Road, Mississauga, Ont.

We wish all our friends and relatives the joys and blessings of Christmas, and a happy and prosperous New Year.
Gerrit & Joukje Hummel, R.R. #1, Monkland, Ont.

We wish family, relatives and friends a very good Christmas season and that 1979 be filled with happiness and contentment.
H. and C. Janssen, 13th St. Louth, Jordan Station, Ont. L0R 1S0.

We wish all our family and friends a blessed Christmas and God's blessing for the New Year.
Hank & Hilly Janssen and family, 65 Rosedale Ave., Brampton, Ont.

Langs deze weg wensen wij al onze familie, vrienden en bekenden een gezegend Kerstfeest toe en tevens Gods onmisbare zegen voor het jaar 1979.
Mr. and Mrs. P. Karsten, Drayton, Ont.

Mr. and Mrs. George Keep, R.R. #2, Newmarket and Piet and Greta Doek, Vleerakkers 90, Emmen/Angelslo, Dr., Holland, wish all their friends a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Aan familie, vrienden en bekenden gezegende Kerstdagen en een voorspoedig 1979 toegewenst.
Mr. & Mrs. Herman John Kite Sr., R.R. #2, Box 1, Site 4, Red Deer, Alta. T4N 5E2.

Mrs. Margaret Knegt en Jake wensen u prettige Kerstdagen en een gelukkig nieuwjaar toe en God's onmisbare zegen.
37 Kerman, Unit 17, Grimsby, Ont. L3M 3W3.

Bij dezen wensen wij al onze familie, vrienden en bekenden een gezegend Kerstfeest en nieuw jaar.
Jan en Maria Koops, 73 Earls Court Cres., Woodstock, Ont.

To wish you many blessings at Christmas time and throughout the coming year. Mrs. H. Mantel, R.R. #1, Waterdown, Ont. L0R 2H0.

Mrs. A. Miedema, Sunset Homes, St. Catharines, wenst al haar familie en vrienden een gezegend Kerstfeest en een gelukkig Nieuwjaar.

Hierbij wensen wij al onze familie, vrienden en kennissen een gezegend Kerstfeest en een Voorspoedig 1979 toe.
Hendrik en Sippy Miedema, Glen Williams, Ont.

Bertus en Jantje Mulder wensen aan al de familie, vrienden en bekenden een gezegend Kerstfeest toe. Eveneens voor het nieuwe jaar 1979 Gods zegen toegewenst.
608 Stone Church Rd., Hamilton, Ont. L8W 1A6.

May the joy of Christmas be a blessing throughout the coming year for all our relatives and friends.
Derk and Rie Manninga, 5 Rothsay Rd., Thornhill, Ont.

We wish all our relatives, friends and acquaintances a blessed Christmas and also the Lord's blessings in the New Year.
Mr. & Mrs. G. Pasma and family
263 Clarks Rd., London, Ont. N5W 5E7.

Een hartelijke Kerst-wens word gezonden aan alle vrienden en bekenden, nabij of veraf door
Fam. Joop Reckman, 1165 Telfer Side Rd., Sarnia Twp., Ont., N7T 7H8;
Fam. Iede Reckman, 239 Stuart Street, Sarnia, Ont., N7T 3B6; and
Fam. Eli Zomerman, 327 Conrad Street, Sarnia, Ont. N7T 3K4.
Dat de vreugde van het ware Kerstfeest het gehele komende jaar in U mag leven!

We wensen familie en vrienden een gelukkig Kerstfeest en Gods zegen toe in 't jaar 1979.
Mr. & Mrs. E.W. Renkema, Woodstock, Ont.

We wish all our relatives and friends a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.
Frances & Gerald Rhebergen

Mrs. Jacob Rintjema wenst familie, vrienden en bekenden een gezegende Kerst en een gelukkig Nieuwjaar.
11 Patton St., Apt. 6, Grimsby, Ont. L3M 3M4.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Salverda wensen vrienden, familie en bekenden een vrolijk Kerstfeest en een gelukkig Nieuwjaar.
30 Elm St., Grimsby, Ont. L3M 1H3.

Wij wensen een gezegend Kerstfeest en Nieuwjaar aan onze familie en vrienden.
Jan Schenk en Aafje Siuys-Schenk, 117 Johnston Ave., Whitby, Ont.

Aan alle familie, vrienden en kennissen gezegende Kerstdagen toegewenst en Gods zegen voor het jaar 1979.
Mrs. R. Schenk, 191 Mountainview Rd. N., Georgetown, Ont. L7G 4T8.

To all our relatives and friends a blessed Christmas and New Year.
Cor & Reini Schuurman and family, R.R. #2, Branchton, Ontario.

To all our friends and relatives we wish Christ's peace and joy for the Christmas season and throughout the New Year.
David & Jenny Tigchelaar, Kevin, Jana and Kim, 8 Audrey St., St. Catharines, Ont.

We wish all our relatives and friends the Lord's blessing at Christmas and His loving care and guidance for the New Year.
Klaas and Anne Tigchelaar, R.R. #1, Waterdown, Ont. L0R 2H0.

Mrs. E. VanderStoep wil langs deze weg alle familie en kennissen D.V., een gezellige Kerst en een gelukkig Nieuwjaar toewensen.
Maranatha Home, 3260, Apt. 209, Burlington, Ont. L7N 3L4.

Mr. & Mrs. C. van Dyk wensen alle vrienden en bekenden gezegende Kerstdagen en een gelukkig Nieuwjaar.
Home adres, 4 Edward Ave., St. Catharines, Ont. L2N 1J9.

Aan familie, vrienden en bekenden een gezegend Kerstfeest en bij de wisseling van het jaar, eveneens Gods rijke zegen voor 1979 van harte toegewenst.
Mr. & Mrs. L. van Harten, Brantford, Ont.

Al onze familie en vrienden wensen wij gezegende Kerstdagen toe en God's zegen voor het jaar 1979.
Mr. and Mrs. A. Van Huizen, 5631 No. 2 Rd., Richmond, B.C. V7C 3L2.

Aan familie, vrienden en bekenden een gezegend Kerstfeest en Nieuwjaar toegewenst.
Mrs. T. van Manen, 25 Tofield Cres., Rexdale, Ont. M9W 2B8.

Mrs. H. Veenstra-Janssen and family wishes all relatives and friends the peace and happiness of Christmas and a blessed 1979.
204 Yeates Ave., Barrie.

Mr. & Mrs. P. Vis Sr. willen langs deze weg alle familie en kennissen een gezegend Kerstfeest en een voorspoedig Nieuwjaar toe wensen.
R.R. #1, Jerseyville, Ont.

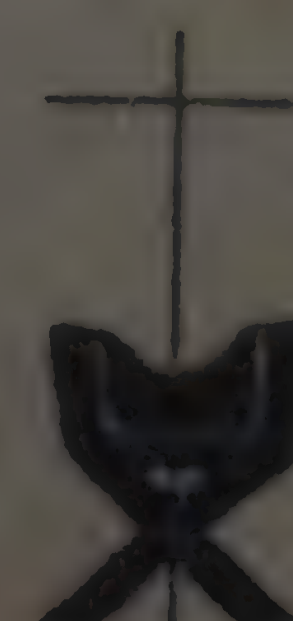
Gezegende Kerstdagen en God's zegen toegewenst in het komende jaar aan familie, vrienden en bekenden door
Mr. & Mrs. N. Vreugdenhil, 2 White St., Apt. 102, St. Catharines, Ont. L2N 1Z2.

Mr. A. Zylstra wil langs deze weg alle familie, vrienden en kennissen een gezegende Kerst en een gelukkig Nieuwjaar toewensen.
2 White St., Apt. 114, St. Catharines.

We wish our family and friends a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.
P. and M. Zylstra, nee Doornbal, 872 Upper Gage Ave., Apt. 101, Hamilton, Ontario L8V 4K8.

WISHING ALL OF YOU GOD'S BLESSING
FOR THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON
AND FOR THE NEW YEAR

From the staff
of Calvinist Contact:



Anje Buma
Anna deVries
Harry deVries
Keith Knight
Jocelyn Langendoen
Jenny Tigchelaar
Helen VanOostveen

From the S.C. Club "Looking Forward"

to all a

BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR
Bloomfield, Ont.

SALUTE TO LORI

A true story

by Berta Hosmar

Mrs. Hosmar, of Whitby, Ont., captured the top award at the School of Christian Writing in Minneapolis, Min., by presenting this true story for their consideration.

This is the story of a courageous South Korean teen-ager, a girl who sacrificed her dreams of good education, a life of her own and a trip to Canada, all for the sake of her family. I don't know if the story has a happy ending, all I can say is that I'm afraid it does not, at least not for Lori, our former foster daughter. But then, who knows, I may be too pessimistic.

It all began several years ago, in 1967. We had supported a Korean orphan for a number of years, as had several of our friends and neighbors. Our child was a little girl of seven, but after a few years "Compassion", the well-known Christian organization which takes care of abandoned children in orphanages, informed us that our girl had been claimed by her mother and had left the home. "Compassion" assigned another South-Korean girl to us and a few weeks later we received Lori's picture and we learned that she was eight years old and had lived in the orphanage since the age of three. Her mother had abandoned her when she was only a baby, and relatives had taken care of her until her third birthday.

From 1967 until 1970 everything remained as it had been with our previous foster daughter. We received Lori's letters regularly. At first the letters were written by the superintendent of the orphanage, but as Lori grew older, she attempted to write herself. We admired the Korean letters and wondered how a child could ever learn these difficult signs.

The translation at the bottom of each letter told us that Lori was doing well in school and that her special talent was music.

We sent our cheques regularly to Compassion's head office in Chicago, Ill., and we remembered Lori on her birthday and at Christmas, but Lori was no more than a family project for us, a vague, hazy figure in a strange, far-away country.

Then, in December 1970, everything changed. "Compassion" informed us that Lori, along with five other talented Korean children, had been picked to go on a fund-raising tour through the United States and Canada. She would visit Kitchener, Ont. on June 16, 1971, and were we interested in meeting her? If so, Compassion would be pleased to give us further details. Were we interested? We could hardly wait to see her. Even our sons, who at their age had no use for girls at all, wanted to see this girl from another continent.

I bought some gifts for Lori and for the other five children, and finally the big day arrived. We left our two-year-old girl home and took the three boys, who were now 12, 9 and 5 years old.

In the car we discussed how we would greet her. "Are you going to kiss her, mom?" our oldest son wanted to know, but his younger brother interrupted, "I bet they don't even kiss in Korea, they probably rub noses". "I really can't stand girls", sighed the oldest again. "All they ever

do is giggle". "Yeah, they're dumb", agreed his brother and I wondered what Lori would think of us. Was an Oriental upbringing much different from a Western upbringing? I remembered a statement I had learned in school: "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet". But children were the same all over the world.

"How old is Lori?" asked one of the boys and dad explained. "She's 12, but she probably won't look much older than 10 or 11. Korean children are often a bit smaller than Canadian children". It turned out that he was right. It struck me that we had all started to call our foster daughter, Lori, the name that had been given to her after she had been picked to go on this tour. Her real name was hard to pronounce, and before December 1970 we had always referred to her as "our Korean orphan".

We felt a little nervous when we saw the six Korean children, dressed in national costumes, appearing on the stage of one of Kitchener's high schools. It was easy to see that the children were happy and well-adjusted, and we had no difficulty picking out Lori.

Mrs. Swanson, the widow of Compassion's founder, explained to us that Lori was not aware that we were in the audience. One of the children had met her sponsors on the tour, and she had been told a week in advance. The result had been that the girl had become so nervous and excited that she had been unable to eat or sleep properly for a week. "You have no idea what it means to these children to have sponsors", explained Mrs. Swanson.

We remembered what we had read on Lori's birth certificate. "Father died of a disease, mother remarried, but whereabouts unknown. "We wondered if Lori realized what she was missing by not having a real family. When the concert was almost over, Mrs. Swanson turned to the audience and explained that Lori's sponsors were present. She then turned to Lori and explained in Korean that Lori was about to see her foster parents.

Poor Lori! Perhaps she should have been told a little sooner. She moved close to Mrs. Swanson, and we could see how nervous she was. A minute later we greeted her, or rather, Lori greeted us! She flung herself into our arms and hugged us and clung to us as if she would never let go again. She started sobbing, and her hands trembled, and somehow we found it the most natural thing in the world to embrace this child which we had never seen before. We didn't know how emotional you were, Lori! It was impossible not to respond to this child's love.

We took her to another room to give her her presents. She still looked completely bewildered, but after opening her first gift she became radiant. We had bought an album for her and had put several pictures of our family in it, and also one of Lori's pictures.

Slowly she repeated the strange names after us. "Gary", she hesitated, "Eddy, Ronald, Joyce". We pointed to her own picture. "Lori", we said.

She looked at us and then pointed to a picture of my husband and me.

"And dad and mommy", she said.



Right then we started loving her.

How thoughtful and polite she was. She carefully put away her gifts, but would not let us dispose of the torn gift wrapping. Instead she kept it, until she could throw it into a wastebasket. She held our hands constantly, until we got into the car to have dinner at the home of a hospitable Korean gentleman. In the car we tried to communicate some more. We discovered that she understood several English sentences, and her eyes, so full of expression, told the rest.

At the home of our host she first found a seat for us, and then she sat down on the floor, close to us. She made sure that we were served first, before she ate her own dinner. She handed me my purse, before I had a chance to get it myself, and she found our shoes, which we had taken off when entering the home of our host, and handed them to us. Somehow we felt like royalty. Give us Korean manners any day! We discovered that she was a sensitive girl. She mothered the youngest child in the group, and when she was asked to join in the games of the other children, she refused, smiling, and stayed close to us.

Lori had the same effect on our whole family. Our sons kept asking questions about her. Lori must have touched their protective instincts. Even the five-year-old, who loved important sounding words, remarked, "I couldn't understand everything Lori was saying, but I think she's a very interesting person," and his brother

agreed. "I wouldn't mind having her for a sister", he mused. "She's cool".

After the dinner we had some more time to spend with Lori, but finally we had to leave. Lori walked us to our car, and again her big, brown eyes filled with tears as she hugged us.

We did not speak much during the ride home. Leaving her behind made us almost feel a little cruel, and we felt a little empty. We realized that Lori had bridged the gap between East and West with one simple ingredient: Love. We knew she was well taken care of and yet the thought of never seeing her again seemed unreal and a little unbearable.

"Do you think we could adopt her?" I asked my husband hesitantly a few days later, and my husband confessed, "I've thought about the same thing".

Adopting a child was not a new experience for us, one of our children is adopted, and my husband started to inquire.

We knew somebody who had worked in Korea for three years. This man had been sent to Korea by the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, and he knew much more about conditions in Korea than we did. We also spoke to another sponsor of a Korean child, who had tried to adopt his foster son, and we came to the conclusion that it would be better to wait until Lori was 18. At that age all the children in orphanages have to leave the home, and look after themselves.

"It's hard for older children to adapt to another culture, and if it doesn't

work out you have interrupted their education"; explained the other sponsor. "And don't forget all the red tape, it's not simple to adopt a Korean child. We invited our foster son to come to Canada for a whole year when he turned 18. He did, and we had a fantastic year, but he decided when the year was over that Korea was his homeland, and he went back. We still correspond with him. He's like a son to us".

"Let's write Lori that she may come for a year when she's 18", my husband suggested, and we both agreed.

Soon Lori's first letter after her tour arrived. The content of the letter was entirely different. We could read so much warmth between the lines, and we understood that Lori considered us to be her family. She was elated when she heard that she could visit us again, and we opened a bank account for Lori's trip.

The years went by, and Lori became a very pretty teenager. "I'm studying English now", she wrote. "In a few years I will be able to speak your language when I come and visit you. I'm also learning much about Jesus, and I thank him every day and I pray for you always."

Everything went fine, until suddenly, during the fall of 1976, Lori's letters stopped coming.

"I wonder if she's sick?" I said to my family, but several weeks later a letter from Compassion's head office arrived. I had to read it twice before I could comprehend what this letter meant. "Lori's mother has come back, and Lori has left the orphanage and now lives with her mother and a few younger brothers", it said.

Compassion thanked us warmly for our support and that was that. We were full of questions. How come Lori's mother had suddenly re-appeared on the scene? What kind of a mother was she to abandon a child for 17 years and then come and claim her? Had Lori wanted to go? Was she happy now? And what about her further education?

We could not bear the uncertainty and we decided to ask Compassion for further details. We met with complete understanding and cooperation. The Chicago office knew no more than we did, but they would write the field office in Korea immediately, and ask for further details.

Several weeks later we received another letter from Compassion. It confirmed our worst fears. Lori's mother had traced her daughter, and had secretly visited Lori's high school. The orphanage had discovered the visits when Lori's tuition fee had not been paid on time. Lori had claimed that she had lost the money, but later she confessed that she had given the money to her mother. Also a watch, and several other gifts for which we had paid, had been given to the mother.

Finally the mother had persuaded Lori to quit school and she had told her daughter it was her duty to take care of her mother. Lori's mother was a well-known prostitute, and she had placed six children in different orphanages. Lori's older brothers wanted nothing to do with their mother, but Lori, sensitive as she was, had decided that it was her duty to earn a living for her mother and her younger brothers.

"We will try to get Lori back in school where she belongs and away from the immoral influence of her mother", wrote the field worker.

"It is not at all unlikely that Lori's mother will eventually try to introduce her daughter to prostitution, and Lori is very vulnerable, and feels very protective of her mother. Our American field worker cannot even speak to Lori and her mother, for the mother feels that Compassion owes her money for loaning her daughter to a fundraising trip through the United States and Canada, five years ago."

We found it next to impossible to understand the mentality of Lori's mother, and again we asked Compassion a favor. Could we write Lori one more letter to tell her that we still wanted to keep our promise, and that she could still come in 1977 if she wanted to?

"We will forward your letter to our Korean office, and they will be more than happy to give it to Lori" Compassion replied.

"Lori does not live too far from the orphanage and she still visits with her friends occasionally."

I tore up my letter several times, for I realized I had to be careful. I assured Lori that we loved her and that we wanted the very best for her. I asked her if she was happy and how she was getting along, and I told her that she could still come and visit us if she wanted to, and if her mother agreed to the trip.

I also told her that she was constantly in our prayers and that the same God who looked after us here in Canada, also loved her very much and was watching over her in Korea. I asked her not to forget what she had learned about serving God in the orphanage and to keep reading her Bible.

Three weeks later we received Lori's letter. It was the longest letter she had ever written us, and it moved us deeply. In it she poured out all the love and gratitude she felt.

"Mom and dad, I have never had a

real mother and now I belong to a real family", she wrote.

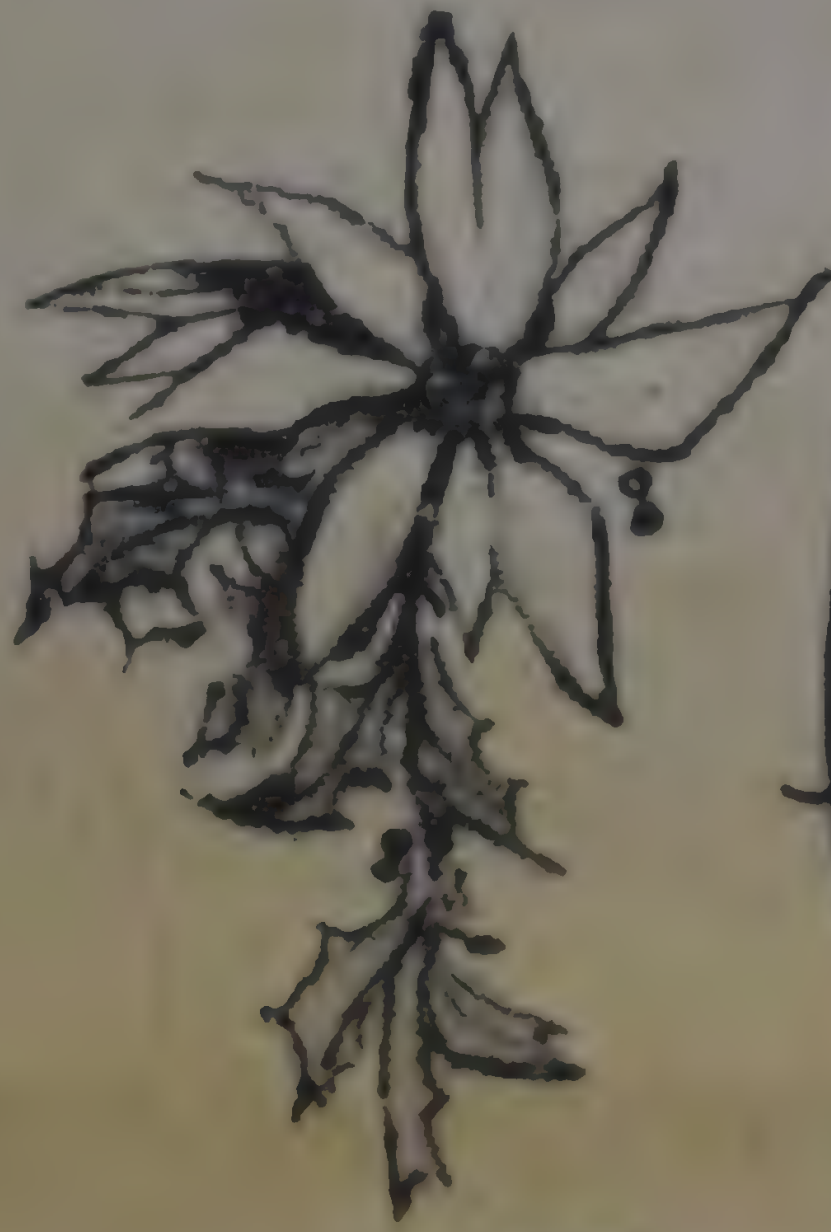
"I don't know if I'm doing the right thing. I work very hard, often more than ten hours a day. I work in a factory, in shifts, and sometimes I'm so tired on weekends that I can't even go to church. I pray for you all the time, and I've not been a good daughter to you, will you please forgive me? But I have to take care of my family. Is it selfish of me to ask if you would write me from time to time? Please hug my little sister in Canada. I love you all so much, I'll never forget you. Your daughter Lori"

She did not mention her trip to Canada and we understood that it was impossible for her to leave her family. It was the last letter we received from Lori. I sent her a card several months

later but we did not receive an answer. She probably feels now that she has to break with her past and devote all her time and energy to the future. Lori is 18 now, so the orphanage is not responsible for her anymore. All we have left here is a drawer with her letters and pictures.

But we know that somewhere in South Korea there's a brave and loving daughter, who did not choose the easy way out, and who did not harbor bitterness towards a mother, who in our Western eyes is unworthy of her daughter's love. What do we know about the circumstances of the mother? Perhaps extreme poverty drove her to prostitution. We hope and we pray that Lori may be a blessing to her family.

We'll never forget you, Lori.



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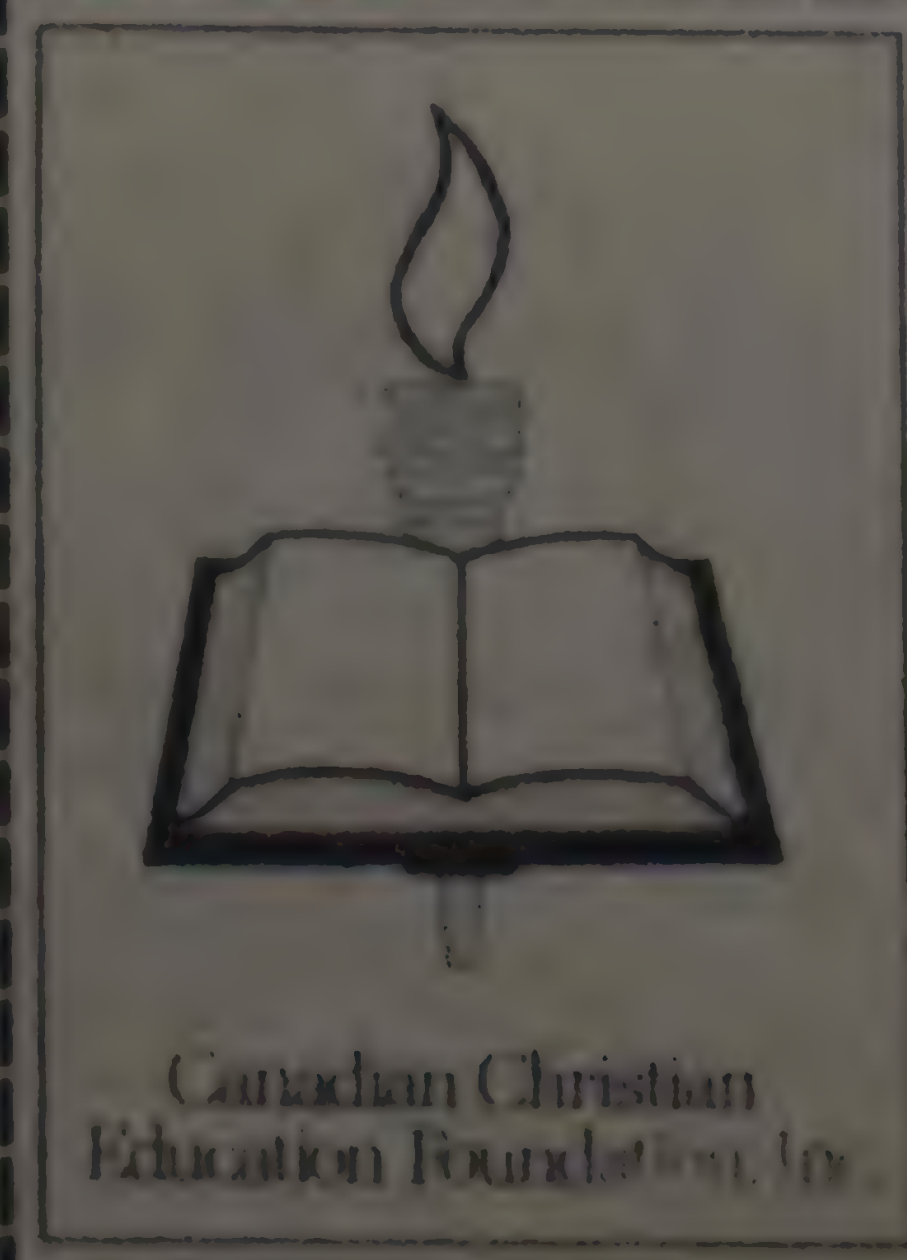
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Jezus is familie van zondaren

Is het niet vertroostend dat we dit mogen neerschrijven: Jezus is familie van zondaren? Hij, die leefde in de heerlijkheid van de Vader als de Zoon van God werd ook mens, en had zelfs een geslachtsregister. En de Vader, is het niet vertroostend om ook dat te mogen neerschrijven, bewees zijn liefde voor ons hierin dat Christus, terwijl wij nog zondaren waren, voor ons stierf? Ja, terwijl wij vijanden waren, werden wij met God verzoend door de dood van zijn Zoon!

Het Nieuwe Testament kent twee geslachtsregisters van de Heer Jezus. Mattheus geeft er een die bij Abraham begint en uitloopt op Jozef, de man van Jezus' moeder. En het blijkt duidelijk dat Jozef niet in de gewone zin des woords Jezus' vader was. Hij wordt hier immers slechts aangeduid als "de man van Maria, uit wie geboren werd Jezus". Het geslachtsregister van Jozef wordt gegeven omdat Jezus door de wet als de zoon van Maria's man, Jozef, werd beschouwd en behandeld.

Lukas geeft een geslachtsregister van Maria dat eindigt met Adam. Zowel Jozef als Maria zijn afstammelingen van David. Maar de Heer Jezus is niet geboren als een Zaligmaker der Joden alleen, doch ook als een Zaligmaker der heidenen. Lukas wijst door zijn geslachtsregister de band van de Heiland aan de gehele mensheid aan. Terwijl Mattheus, die in het bijzonder voor de Joden schrijft, duidelijk laat zien dat Jezus ook een zoon van David en van Abraham is.

De Zoon des mensen, de tweede Adam, is wel ontvangen van de Heilige Geest, maar geboren uit de maagd Maria. Hij heeft zijn menselijke natuur niet uit de hemel meegebracht, doch is als mens geboren. Het Woord is vlees geworden. Het heeft onder ons gewoond. En ... de Heer Jezus werd familie van ons, van ons, zondaren. Dat moet er bij. Als we het geslachtsregister nalezen, dan wordt dat erg duidelijk gemaakt. Het wordt wel eens "de heilige linie" genoemd, maar ze kan alleen zo genoemd worden omdat ze op de Heilige uitloopt. De engel Gabriël zei immers tot Maria: De Heilige Geest zal over u komen, en de kracht des Allerhoogsten zal u overschaduwen; daarom zal ook het heilige, dat geboren wordt, Gods Zoon genoemd worden!

In zichzelf is die linie, dat geslachtsregister, helemaal niet heilig. En Mattheus laat de geslachten aan de ogen van zijn lezers voorbijgaan om hen er van te overtuigen dat deze Jezus familie van zondaren was, en echt de Redder der Joden kon worden genoemd, hoe vreemd de lijst ook mocht wezen. Hij was de zoon van David, de zoon van Abraham. En dat niet alleen, Mattheus begon al met te zeggen dat die Jezus ook Christus was, de Messias, de Gezalfde, dwz. de aan de vaders Belofde! Dat hele geslachtsregister wordt dus Christus-prediking. Eerst voor de Jood (geschreven in het Hebreeuws) en ook voor de Griek (later vertaald in het Grieks).

Mattheus wil zijn lezers er van doordringen dat de Heer Jezus Christus de vleesgeworden Middelaar

Gods en der mensen is. En door allerlei toevoegingen en de vermelding zelfs van enkele vrouwen laat hij een eigenaardig licht vallen op de wijze waarop de "heilige linie" tot stand gekomen is. Hij geeft hierdoor een bijzondere boodschap weer, die ik heb uitgedrukt in de titel boven dit artikel: Jezus, familie van zondaren.

Mattheus doet het hier heel anders dan de Joden dat gewend waren. In de joodse geslachtsregisters komen vrijwel geen namen van vrouwen voor. Vrouwen behoeften niet genoemd te worden. We zouden Mattheus' geslachtsregister gerust een tendentieuze register kunnen noemen. De zonde heeft de linie zeer duidelijk aangetast. En we denken dan vooral aan de vrouwen die genoemd worden, Thamar, Rachab, Ruth en de vrouw van Uria. En Mattheus noemt ze zomaar en voert ze voor het licht.

Het is te begrijpen dat de naam van Maria moet worden genoemd. Maar waarom dan ook niet de naam van de eerste moeder in deze linie, die met Abraham begint, waarom Sara niet? Thamar is een heidin. Ze is echter de schoondochter geworden van Juda. Daar ziet u al de verwording van het geslacht van Abraham. Wat doet een heidin in de tenten van Abraham? en nog wel als schoondochter van Juda, de zoon van Jacob, die straks zijn naam zou verlenen aan de Joden, en uit wiens geslacht de Messias zou voortkomen. Door de zonde die Juda met Thamar bedreven heeft worden Peres en Zerah geboren. En in Peres wordt de heilige linie voortgezet. Al waren de motieven van Thamar anders, we zouden kunnen zeggen beter dan die van Juda, ze wilde immers zo graag met Gods volk verbonden blijven, het is alles bij elkaar toch een door en door zondig bedrijf.

En dan komt Rachab's naam in dit geslachtsregister voor. De hoer van Jericho. Ze ziet iets in de God van Israël. Ze hangt een scharlaken koord uit haar venster, gehoorzaam aan de verspieders die haar met een eed zweren dat zij gespaard zal blijven als zij hen niet verradt. Haar huis wordt gespaard, en zij wordt opgenomen in Israël, Gods volk, trouwt en wordt moeder van een geslacht waaruit Boaz voortkomt, die trouwt met Ruth, de Moabitische. En Moab is uit Lot, die met zijn dochter zondigde. God bewijst echter zijn genade aan Ruth, die met Naomi wegtrekt uit Moab, met de belijdenis op haar lippen en in haar hart: uw volk is mijn volk, en uw God is mijn God!

De herinnering aan de geschiedenis van Juda en Thamar, en de vermelding van de namen van Rachab en Ruth en van Uria's vrouw heeft, volgens Ridderbos, ongetwijfeld ook een polemische en apologetische strekking. Tegenover de vleeselijke hoogmoed en zelfgenoegzaamheid der Joden, die hen de Christus deed verwerpen en die de prediking van het evangelie aan de heidenen niet verdroeg, stelt Mattheus hun de schandvlekken in de heilige linie en het vreemde bloed in hun eigen koningshuis voor ogen. Maar tevens heeft dit alles ook een positieve strekking: het laat zien, hoe de Christus opkomt uit

diepe vernedering, ook hierin 'veracht en de onwaardigste onder de mensen', en gezonden 'in gelijkheid des zondigen vlees'. Voorts blijkt er uit, dat Hij reeds krachtens geboorte tot de heidenen in een zekere betrekking stond. Niet minder echter schittert in dit alles het onwederstandelijk werken van de God des Verbonds, die zijn werk, ook door de zonde en de schande der mensen heen, tot volkomenheid brengt en vrij is in het kiezen van zijn instrumenten.

Ook goddeloze koningen als Achaz worden genoemd, terwijl zelfs in de ballingschap het koningshuis is bewaard gebleven met het oog op de heilige linie.

Zo heeft de Heilige Geest het laten opschrijven opdat Joden en Heidenen, ook wij zouden verstaan dat onze Heer Jezus Christus familie van zondaren is, en voor zondaren in de wereld kwam. Hij heeft zich vernederd. Het Nieuwe Testament begint met deze lijst, opdat wij zouden verstaan: uit zulke mensen is de Heer Jezus Christus naar zijn menselijke natuur voortgekomen. Voor zulke zondaren kwam Hij in de wereld. Onbegrijpelijk, ongelofelijk, maar toch heus waar!

Hij is door God gezonden. Hij is door de Heilige Geest gezalfd. Hij is de Zoon van God. Hij is ons in alles gelijk, behalve de zonde. Hij is uit ons mensengeslacht voortgekomen, of u nu terug gaat tot Abraham (Mattheus) of tot Adam (Lukas). Door al de eeuwen heen heeft God voor die lijst gezorgd. Soms hing het voortbestaan van de heilige linie aan een zijden draad. Van Gods kant was die draad echter onbreekbaar. De duivel wilde die lijst wel verscheuren. God zorgde in zijn genade echter dat de heilige linie bewaard bleef.

Mattheus wijst ons ook op de symmetrie die in de stamboom van de Heer Jezus valt op te merken. Mattheus schildert drie perioden en in elke periode vermeldt hij veertien geslachten. Strack-Billerbeck zegt er van: 'op veertien genealogische trappen klimt Abrahams nakomelingenschap op, tot ze in David het hoogtepunt van haar macht bereikt; op nogmaals veertien trappen zinkt Israëls macht weg tot in de nacht der ballingschap; uit deze diepte der vernedering stijgt eindelijk wederom op veertien trappen de lijn op, die in Jezus culmineert. In dit verloop der geschiedenis moeten de lezers niet het spel van het toeval, maar het beleid van een hogere hand zien tot versteviging van de overtuiging, dat Jezus de antitype van David, de Messias is.'

De indeling der geschiedenis in gelijke perioden was aan de Joden niet vreemd. De symmetrie die Mattheus in dit geslachtsregister weet aan te wijzen, wordt door hem gebruikt om de Joden voor wie hij schreef te bewijzen dat Jezus de Zoon van David is, de Messias. Ja, Mattheus schreef allereerst voor de Joden, daarom begint zijn opgetekend geslachtsregister bij Abraham. Hij schreef zijn evangelie in de Hebreeuwse taal (of als men wil in het Aramees, de taal, die aan het Hebreeuws verwant,

gesproken werd in de tijd toen de Heer Jezus op aarde was). Hij schreef voor de Joden, vandaar zo ontzaggelijk veel aanhalingen uit het Oude Testament in dit evangelie.

Irenaeus deelt mee dat Mattheus onder de Hebreërs in hun eigen taal een evangelie in het licht heeft gegeven, terwijl Petrus en Paulus in Rome het evangelie brachten en de kerk stichtten. Eusebius schrijft dat Mattheus een evangelie geschreven heeft voor de Hebreërs in hun moedertaal en hun dit heeft nagelaten, toen hij naar elders ging. Meer getuigen zouden zijn aan te voeren die alle spreken over een evangelie van Mattheus in de moedertaal van de Joden.

Dit werpt ook enig licht op de symmetrie van de geslachtslijst, nl. driemaal veertien geslachten. Er zit iets kunstmatigs in de samenstelling van deze lijst. In elke commentaar op het evangelie van Mattheus vindt u de opmerking dat er veel meer geslachten tussen Abraham en David, tussen David en de ballingschap, tussen de ballingschap en Christus hebben geleefd. Waarom wordt er dan van slechts veertien gesproken?

Als u de oorspronkelijke tekst van het evangelie van Mattheus zoudt zien in de Hebreeuwse of Aramese taal, dan zoudt u daar zien staan: van Abraham tot David waren er David geslachten, en van David tot de ballingschap waren er David geslachten, en van de ballingschap tot Jezus Christus waren er David geslachten. Het is dus David "all the way". Vroeger schreef men de getallen met letters. De Romeinen deden dat ook: X = 10, L = 50, C = 100, D = 500, M = 1000. Nu, de Joden deden dat ook. Als ze 14 moesten schrijven, schreven ze David. De getalswaarde van het woord David is veertien! Zo vertelde Mattheus aan de Joden, die het Aramese evangelie lazen dat de Heer Jezus Christus inderdaad de grote Zoon van David was, die komen zou, de Messias, de Gezalfde des Heren.

De evangeliën geven ons te zien Jezus als de Christus, de aan de vaders Belofde, de lang verwachte Zoon van David, de Koning van Israël. "Het evangelie van Mattheus is een grote apologie van het Christelijk geloof in het licht van het Oude Testament en daarom ook een grote aanklacht tegen het ongeloof van de Joden. De woorden 'opdat vervuld zou worden' vormen trouwens in heel het evangelie een steeds terugkerend refrein." (Ridderbos)

Daarom begint Mattheus met het geslachtsregister van Jezus Christus, de zoon van David, de zoon van Abraham. Hij schildert daarin Jezus als familie van zondaren. Naast het geslachtsregister van Adam (Genesis 5:1) geeft Mattheus een geslachtsregister van Jezus Christus. Naast de genesis van Adam, een genesis van de tweede Adam. De onheilige linie brengt voort de Heilige, die door zijn geboorte familie van zondaren te worden, en voor zijn familie te sterven, vergeving van zonde en eeuwig leven verwerft. Wie dat op het Kerstfeest ziet, heeft een gezegend kerstfeest.

J. VanHarmelen

De kerstnacht van Johannes Van Seeveren

door H.J. Waalwijk

Het verhaal is mij verteld door een officier van justitie. Ik noem u de bron ten bewijze dat het authentiek is, dus dat het gebeurd is zoals u het hieronder vindt beschreven. U zou daaraan n.l. kunnen twifelen en niemand zou u dat kwalijk mogen nemen, want het is aan de vooravond van Kerstfeest vreemd gegaan met Johannes van Seeveren. Toen destijds enkele reclasseringsambtenaren er van hoorden moeten zij van verbazing de handen in elkaar geslagen hebben en hebben uitgeroepen: "Er is een wonder gebeurd..."

De officier zei: "Dat was het ook, maar het was niets bijzonders. Sinds zich eeuwen geleden in die onooglijke stal in Bethlehem het grootste Wonder voltrok dat de mensheid ooit heeft mogen aanschouwen zijn er nog altijd wonderen gebeurd en zijn ze nog altijd te verwachten."

En omdat de mensheid weer op weg is naar de vooravond van Kerstfeest, doe ik u het verhaal zoals het mij verteld is.

Johannes van Seeveren was een man van wie men zei dat hij niet deugde. De officier vertelde: Alles wat verkeerd en kwaad was deed hij. Zijn straflijst was dikker dan van wie ook. Toen ik hem voor het eerst ontmoette was hij negentien jaar, maar toen had hij al drie jaar in een opvoedingsgesticht doorgebracht. Nadien zag ik hem geregeld terug. Dan voor dit en dan voor dat. Hij was inbreker, en - misschien klinkt dat gek uit mijn mond - een zeer bekwame, hij was een grote vechtersbaas, hij dronk ontzaglijk, en als hij dronken was gedroeg hij zich als een wild dier, en op het laatst deinsde hij er niet voor terug zich te vergrijpen aan het leven van een ander, hij pleegde doodslag.

Bij de burgerlijke stand stond hij ingeschreven als zeeman, en een enkel jaar heeft hij de zeeën ook bevaren, maar nadat hij een paar maal een gevangenisstraf had uitgezeten, was er geen rederij meer te vinden die hem op de schepen toeliet. En toen ging het helemaal bergafwaarts met hem. Het werd gevangenis in en gevangenis uit, soms vier jaar opgeborgen, een half jaar vrij, en dan begon het weer. Met die van Seeveren, zei de officier, was geen land te bezien. Hij was een zware man, zijn lengte lag zo tegen de twee meter, hij had handen als kolenschoppen, en een van de vrouwelijke advocaten vertelde me eens, dat zij vond, dat hij een wrede mond had. Zijn ogen lagen diep in hun kassen en zwart sluik haar hing over zijn voorhoofd. Het was moeilijk een gesprek met hem te voeren. Op vragen gaf hij ternauwernood antwoord. Nooit keek hij je aan als je met hem sprak. Hij hield het hoofd omlaag en staarde maar steeds naar de grond.

Zo was dan - zei de officier - Johannes van Seeveren. In de tijd, waarover ik het nu heb bestond er nog niet, zoals nu, een psychiatrisch onderzoek bij de verdachten. We hadden alleen onze reclasseringsambtenaren en die brachten als wij dat nodig vonden een rapport over bepaalde figuren uit. Ik wist aanvankelijk van van Seeveren niets af, behalve dan, dat hij het de rechtbank ongelooflijk moeilijk maakte. Op een keer liet ik - hij was voorgeleid verdacht van inbraak - door een van de ambtenaren van het O.M. een onderzoek instellen naar zijn afkomst. En toen ik dat rapport las, meende ik te ontdekken waar bij hem de schoen wrong. Zijn opvoeding was verre van normaal geweest. Al jong had hij zijn vertier op straat moeten zoeken. En wie er nog niet van overtuigd is dat ook de straat een opvoeding geeft, moet zich maar eens verdiepen in het leven van Johannes van Seeveren. Maar dit moet

ik er aan toevoegen: wie door de straat wordt groot gebracht loopt meer kans met de justitie in aanraking te komen dan zij, die in hun jeugd een echt gezinsleven hebben gekend. Dit ter waarschuwing van de ouders van de, wat men noemt, nozems. Wat een gezinsle-

venslang zou krijgen stond als een paal boven water.

En dat greep me sterk aan. Hij was iets jonger dan ik, maar niet veel. En ik trok een vergelijking tussen zijn leven en het mijne. Herhaaldelijk waren we met elkaar in contact gekomen. Onze



ven is heeft van Seeveren nooit geweten. Hartelijkheid had hij in zijn jeugd nooit ondervonden. En later zocht hij die niet meer. Hij geloofde alleen maar in het recht van de sterkste, en niet in de kracht van de liefde. Het woord liefde stond ook niet in zijn woordenboek. Een meisje was er nooit in zijn leven. Tot zijn dood is hij ongetrouwd gebleven.

Ik ben in alles wat uitvoerig - zei de officier - om het wonder dat zich aan hem voltrok des te beter te laten uitkomen. U kunt zich er nu wel een voorstelling van maken, denk ik. Op het laatst was er geen advocaat meer te vinden die hem wilde verdedigen. En in het milieu, waarin hij zich bewoog was er geen man en geen vrouw die nog met hem wilde omgaan. De kroegbazen zelfs zagen hem liever niet dan wel, en zodra hij maar de schijn wekte herrie te willen maken, werd hij al door een man of vier, vijf, graag en spontaan de deur uitgewerkt, en niet zo zachtzinnig.

En dit laatste nu - vertelde de officier - werd de inleiding tot het wonder. Er zijn maar weinig zaken in mijn leven, die me zo glashelder zijn bijgebleven als die van Johannes van Seeveren. Op een zondagavond laat werd ik gewaarschuwd, dat er een man was doodgestoken in de wijk waar het plezier uitbuding is en het leven fel wordt geleefd. Het was moord met voorbedachte rade, dat stond vast. En de verdachte, de moordenaar, zo je wilt, was Johannes van Seeveren. De avond tevoren was het tot een vechtpartij gekomen tussen hem en de kroegbaas. Hij was de zaak uitgelopen, had dit niet kunnen verwerken, was de volgende avond met een hart opgeknepen van haatgevoelens teruggekomen, en had zonder een woord te zeggen, de man achter de tapkast met een mes diep in het hart gestoken.

De zaak lag dus simpel. Hij werd voor mij geleid. Ik wist, dat hij mijn laatste "grote geval" zou worden, want ik stond op het punt mijn loopbaan bij het openbaar ministerie te beëindigen. Ik had mijn jaren volgemaakt. En ik wist ook, dat ik de laatste zou zijn die zich, buiten de gevangensmuren met van Seeveren zou bemoeien. Want dat hij

levens hadden elkaar voortdurend gekruist. Ik had carrière gemaakt en zijn leven was verwoest.

Dit, en het feit dat we leefden in de week voor Kerstfeest, werd oorzaak, dat ik besloot eens openhartig met hem te spreken. Niet in de eerste plaats als officier tot verdachte, maar als mens tot mens, als schepsel Gods tot schepsel Gods. Op een avond liet ik hem op mijn kamer komen en ik begon over zijn leven. In alle openhartigheid sprak ik met hem. Ik vertelde hem dat we elkaar, als de rechter uitspraak had gedaan, nooit meer zouden ontmoeten, en ik stelde hem op de man af de vraag, of hij, als hij een terugblik wierp op de voorbije jaren geen gevoel van spijt en wroeging had om alles wat hij gedaan had. Ik vroeg hem of hij rust kon vinden nu hij een eind had gemaakt aan het leven van een ander. En tenslotte sprak ik met hem over het leven na dit leven, over de rekenschap die hij had af te leggen als voor hem de dag was aangebroken, die eens voor iedereen aanbreekt. Uren sprak ik met hem. Hij zei niets. Hij keek maar naar de grond, en gaf zelfs door geen teken te kennen dat hij luisterde naar wat ik zei. En ik begreep, dat al mijn moeite voor niets was geweest.

En ik had het er niet best onder - vertelde de officier. Ik kond de gedachte niet van me afzetten, dat ik op een of ander punt gefaald had. Het was me nog nooit overkomen dat een verdachte ongevoelig bleef voor een gesprek. Tientallen mensen, jong en oud, heb ik in mijn loopbaan van het verkeerde van hun daden kunnen overtuigen en op de goede weg kunnen helpen. Bij Johannes van Seeveren stuitte alles af op botte onverschilligheid. Het was onmogelijk door te dringen tot zijn hart. Had hij feitelijk wel een hart? Die Kerstdagen zou mijn dochter met man en kind bij ons logeren. En hoewel hun komst altijd een vreugde voor mij was, werd dit keer de vreugde weggeduwd door het geval van Seeveren. Ik wist niet wat ik moest doen. Ik vond, dat het mislukte gesprek een schaduw wierp op mijn hele loopbaan. In de grond van de zaak vond ik, dat ik als

officier van justitie was mislukt. Je kunt ook zeggen - want dat was de werkelijkheid - dat ik in mijn ijdelheid was gekrenkt. Ik, de officier van justitie, een man die bekend was om zijn grote overredingskracht, had het moeten afleggen tegen een nietsnut, tegen een moordenaar. Mijn goed-bedoelde woorden had hij langs zich laten afglijden. Hij had gedaan of ik niet bestond. Hij had me getrotseerd.

Men zegt wel eens - vervolgde de officier - dat het in het leven van de mens merkwaardig kan gaan. Het woord "merkwaardig" gebruik ik echter lang niet meer. Sinds die Kerstavond. De zaterdag voor de Kerstdagen besloot ik nog een keer een poging tot toenadering tot van Seeveren te ondernemen. Ik volgde daarbij de stem van mijn hart. Het was alsof me voortdurend werd toegefluiserd: "Je kunt zo geen Kerstfeest vieren. Toe, probeer het voor de laatste maal."

Het was zaterdagavond zeven uur. Ik zei tegen mijn vrouw dat ik nog een uurtje naar het gerechtsgebouw ging om een paar stukken af te werken, waarbij haast was. Hoewel ik aan haar ogen zag, dat ze dit vreemd vond, zei ze niets. Ik beloofde haar, dat ik om acht uur mijn dossiers zou sluiten en naar huis zou komen.

En nu moet u even goed luisteren, want de eerste tekenen van het wonder, dat zich zou gaan voltrekken, treden reeds naar voren. Om acht uur zou ik, mijn dossiers sluiten...

De klok wees half acht toen van Seeveren bij me werd gebracht. Ik gaf hem een stoel en zei tegen de bewaarder dat ik alleen met hem wilde zijn. Van Seeveren had als gewoonlijk zijn grote handen op zijn knieën gelegd en hield het hoofd gebogen. In die houding luisterde hij naar mij, tenminste ik neem aan dat hij luisterde. Ik sprak, zoals ik nog nooit gesproken had. Ik behoefde niet naar woorden te zoeken. Ze rolden uit mijn mond. Het was alsof een ander door mij sprak. Intussen keek ik maar naar de klok, waarvan de wijzers naar het scheen vlugger gingen dan anders. Ze naderden het tijdstip, waarop ik me had voorgenomen het gesprek te beëindigen, en ik was niets nader gekomen tot de man die in mijn kamer zat. Op een ogenblik, toen het me te benauwd werd, bad ik: "O God, laat het lukken!" Maar het lukte niet, ik begreep, dat ik had gefaald, voorgoed, en dat deed me pijn.

En nu komt het, zei de officier. De klok had juist twee slagen van de acht laten vallen en ik stond op het punt de bewaker te bellen, toen ik plotseling in de gang rumoer hoorde, de deur van mijn kamer werd opengegooid en mijn kleindochter binnenstormde. Een klein blond meisje, dat toen vijf jaar was. Ze liep op me af en zei: "Dag opa, ik kom u halen, het is acht uur." Later heb ik gehoord hoe alles in zijn werk is gegaan, en als u het hoort zegt u wellicht: een samenloop van omstandigheden, een reeks toevalligheden. Nee, het waren geen toevalligheden. Kort nadat ik was vertrokken waren mijn kinderen gearriveerd. Verbaasd, mij niet te zien, hadden ze gevraagd waar ik was. "In het gerechtsgebouw," antwoordde mijn vrouw, maar ze voegde er aan toe dat ik om acht uur zou thuiskomen. Mijn dochter opperde het plan mij te gaan halen, dat mijn kleindochter enthousiast maakte. Mijn kleindochter, die wist in welke kamer ik zat, rende direct naar me toe, luisterde niet naar de bewaarder die voor de deur stond geposteed en haar vertelde dat ik in bespreking was.

Nadat mijn kleindochter me had begroet, en ineens van Seeveren ontdekte, bleef ze stokstijf staan en keek me vragend aan. Zonder dit te willen zei ik: "Geef meneer maar een hand." Ze liep vervolg op pag.18

Johannes Van Seeveren

vervolg van pag. 17

op hem toe en zei: "Dag meneer", terwijl ze haar hand uitstak. Mijn kleindochter, vermoedelijk in de veronderstelling dat hij haar niet had gezien, ging dicht bij hem staan en herhaalde: "dag meneer", en streek met haar hand over de zijne.

Wat toen gebeurde zal ik mijn leven lang niet vergeten. Toen dat kind zijn hand greep was het alsof hij een elektrische schok kreeg. Er ging een siddering door dat grote, zware lichaam, en nog een. Hij lichtte het hoofd op en keek met grote ogen naar dat blonde meisje, dat voor hem stond en zijn mond bewoog met zenuwachtige trekken, net alsof hij iets wilde zeggen. Hij zei ook iets. Hij zei: "dag", en nog een: "dag", en een derde keer: "dag."

Mijn kleindochter die niets begreep van de ontmoeting bij van Seeveren, vroeg vriendelijk: "Hoe heet u?" En toen zei hij niet: Van Seeveren, maar hij zei: "Johannes". "O," antwoordde ze, "wat een mooie naam," en ze streek nogmaals zijn hand. Dat was te veel voor hem. Hij barstte uit in een wilde huiltui, hij snikte en gierende zo hard dat de bewaarder verschrikt mijn kamer binnenkwam.

Ik liet van Seeveren naar zijn cel brengen en waarschuwde de dokter. Ik zei, dat ik de volgende dag zou terugkomen als hij wat was gekalmeerd. Maar diezelfde avond nog werd ik gewaarschuwd dat van Seeveren herhaaldelijk naar me vroeg. Ik ben naar hem toegegaan en ik vond een volkomen gebroken man. Een man die van ellende niet wist waar hij het zoeken moest. Dat was het grote wonder. Wat ik niet had kunnen volbrengen had mijn kleindoch-

ter gedaan. Een man, een keiharde man in het hart geraakt. Niet met woorden, maar met een gebaar. Door zijn hand te grijpen.

Hij heeft me die Kerstavond alles verteld. En ik heb zitten luisteren. Het was alsof er geen einde aan zijn bekentenis kwam. Zijn hele leven heeft hij voor me blootgelegd. En toen hij was uitgesproken zei hij: Dat is het dan meneer. Alles voorbij en alles verloren. Toen kon ik hem vertellen van een ander Kind, dat ook was gekomen tot mensen van wie het heet dat zij niet deugden. Mensen, die eveneens een straflijst hadden om van te rillen en te beven. Maar het Kind kwam toch tot hen.

In die Kerstnacht heeft van Seeveren voor het eerst zijn knieën gebogen. Ik heb met hem gebeden, en ik hoorde dat hij mijn woorden herhaalde. Toen kwam de rust over hem. Het wonder had zich aan hem voltrokken.

Het is, zei de officier, een vreemd verhaal, ik weet het. Maar het bewijst dat het wonder nog steeds door deze wereld gaat. Toen zijn zaak voorkwam, heb ik acht jaar geëist, en de rechter nam die eis over. Hij heeft zijn straf niet helemaal uit hoeven zitten. In het derde jaar werd hij zwaar ziek. Hij stierf in een ziekenhuis. Hij had gevraagd of het mogelijk was dat er geen bewaking kwam. Die vraag heb ik ingewilligd. Ik stond aan zijn bed toen hij de grens van de eeuwigheid overschreed...

Uit: Kerstboekje, een bundel verhalen en gedichten, samengesteld door Miep Van Rooijen, uitgegeven door J.N. Voorhoeve, Den Haag.

PERSOVERZICHT

by Carl D. Tuyt

• "Ziet toe, dat niemand u verleide! Want velen zullen komen onder mijn naam en zeggen: "Ik ben de Christus, en zij zullen velen verleiden." Het aantal zelfmoorden in Guyana blijkt nu veel hoger te zijn dan aanvankelijk werd gerapporteerd. Meer dan negen honderd mensen benamen zichzelf van het leven. In China is men bezig een andere Messias figuur tot menselijke gestalte terug te brengen. In plakaten aan de muren in Peking wordt nu toegegeven dat ook Mao-tse-Tung in het verleden fouten heeft begaan.

• Trudeau heeft alvast Sinterklaas gevierd met een stoelendans in het kabinet. Twee nieuwe ministers werden lid van de regering en er werd een nieuwe portefeuille geschapen voor Economische Zaken.

• De prime ministers vergaderden in Ottawa over economische aangelegenheden. De provincies wierpen begerige blikken naar Alberta's Heritage Fund, het spaarpotje van de regering daar, waar ieder jaar pakweg zo ongeveer een biljoen olie-dollars in worden gedeponeerd.

• In de gelijkenis over het oordeel van de Zoon des mensen in het evangelie van Mattheus, hoofdstuk vijftienvig, zegt de Here tot hen aan zijn rechterhand: "Ik ben een vreemdeling geweest en gij hebt mij gehuust." Wij mogen blij zijn dat onze regering ons land opende voor meer dan 600 vluchtelingen uit Vietnam. De eerste van deze "vreemdelingen" zijn in Canada gearriveerd. Er is nogal speculatie in de pers omtrent de procedure waarbij deze mensen Vietnam verlaten. Men spreekt van betalingen aan de regering aldaar waarmee toestemming voor het verlaten van het land wordt gekocht. De Vietnam regering schijnt een winstgevend zaakje in ellende te bedrijven.

• En om te besluiten een mededeling die wel niet in de krant zal komen. Afgelopen zondag begon de kerk het adventseizoen. Veel kerkgebouwen worden ter gelegenheid van dat gebeuren in een soort pseudo-bos herschapen met kerstgroen en kaarsen op de banken en preekstoel. De herbergier, die het bordje 'no vacancy' buiten had opgehangen, zal het in menige preek wel weer hard te verduren krijgen. Dominees over de hele wereld krijgen kromme ruggen van het preken maken, en de herbergier is altijd goed voor een preek met het thema: "Geen plaats in de herberg". Misschien zit er tussen al dat groen en die kaarsen nog wel iemand die in benauwdheid zal bidden: "Here Jezus, kom haastig." Ik zal met u meebidden, maar tot die tijd: 't hoofd omhoog!

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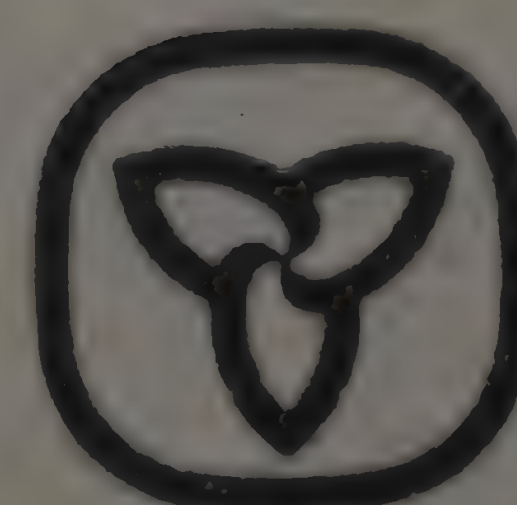
mensen betekenen.

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**Larry Grossman,
Minister of Industry
and Tourism**

William Davis, Premier

Province of Ontario

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Notes of Thanks

DE ROOS: We wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all those who showed us, in various ways, their concern and sympathy during the illness and passing away of my wife, and our mother and grandmother, Grietje DeRoos. We are comforted by the assurance that she is now with her Lord and Saviour. May the Lord bless you all. Woiter De Roos and family, R.R. #3, Fenwick, Ont.

Births

HOGETERP: Andy and Betsy (Vervet) thank the Lord above who sent a little babe our way. All gift wrapped with His love. We named her ERIN NICOLE, born Sunday, November 19, 1978. A little sister for Justin, Jarrod and Sharlene. Ps. 144:12. "May our sons in their youth be like plants full grown, our daughters like corner pillars cut for the structures of a palace." Ps. 144:15. "Happy the people to whom such blessings fall. Happy the people whose God is the Lord!" R.R. #4, Cayuga, Ont.

OTTENS: On Thanksgiving Day, October 9, 1978, Hank and Gerty had received a beautiful and special gift from the Lord for which we are very thankful for. The special gift was a healthy daughter, SHERRI ALICE, a sister for Kimberly Ann. The third granddaughter for both proud grandparents: Mr. and Mrs. J. Ottens and Mr. and Mrs. G. Klasen both of Moorefield, Ont. Also the third great-granddaughter of Mrs. J. Lise of Drayton, Ont.

RENKEMA: We are thankful that the Lord has blessed us with KAREN JENNIFER, our first child, on November 3, 1978. We pray that she may always love and serve the Lord. Thankful parents are Albert and Christine Renkema. Karen is the first grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. John Donker and 15th grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. E.W. Renkema, both of Woodstock. R.R. #2, Embro, Ontario N0J 1J0.

Marriages

DE GROOT - MOESKER: We MARGARET ANN DE GROOT, daughter of Mrs. Maria de Groot of Vauxhall, Alta. and MARK MOESKER, son of Mr. Luke Moesker of Wellandport, Ont., are happy to announce our forthcoming marriage. The ceremony will take place, the Lord willing, on Saturday, December 30, 1978 at 2:30 p.m. in the Christian Reformed Church of Smithville, Ont. Rev. P. Ravensbergen officiating. Future address: R.R. #3, Wellandport, Ont. L0R 2J0.

FARENHORST - SANDBULTE: Thankful to the Lord who brought them together, Mrs. D. Farenhorst and Mr. and Mrs. H. Sandbulte, Iowa, are happy to announce the forthcoming marriage of their children, JOANNE and DAN. The wedding ceremony will take place, the Lord willing, on December 16, 1978, at 2 p.m. in Calvin Seminary Chapel, 3233 Burton St. S.E., Grand Rapids, Mi., Dr. Oostendorp officiating. Future address: 20 Packard St. S.E., Grand Rapids, Mi.

Marriages

MOESKER-DURU: We, TIM and ROELY DURU (nee Moesker), are happy to announce our marriage celebration which took place, Friday, December 8, 1978 in the First Christian Reformed Church of Red Deer, Alta. Rev. N.B. Knoppers officiating. New address: 6750-59th Ave., Red Deer, Alta.

Anniversaries

London Montreal
1953 December 19 1978
With joy and thanksgiving to God we congratulate and celebrate with our parents and grandparents,

JERRY and MIEN MORSINK
on the happy occasion of their 25th Wedding Anniversary.
Eric
Richard
Belinda
Open House will be held Tuesday, December 19, 1978 from 2:30 - 4:30 and 8 - 10 p.m. at 15215 Place Bellerive, St. Genevieve, P.Q.

Leeuwarden Willowdale
1953 1978
It is with joy and thankfulness to the Lord that we wish to celebrate with our parents,

PIET and HILDA VANDER VEEN
(nee Van Gennep)

their 25th Wedding Anniversary on Thursday, December 28, 1978. We thank the Lord that He has given our parents these years together and pray for many more.
Rita
Theo
Edward
Jacqueline
Psalm 33:21,22 "Yea, our heart is glad in Him, because we trusted in His holy name, let Thy steadfast love, O Lord be upon us, even as we hope in Thee."
Open house on December 28, 1978 at the Willowdale Christian Reformed Church from 7 to 9 p.m. (70 Hilda Ave.). Home address: 217 Moore Park Ave., Willowdale. Best Wishes Only.

1953 1978
We are thankful to the Lord that we can share with our parents,

HENK and EIKE VAN RYSWYK
(nee Van Der Beek)

in the celebration of their 25th Wedding Anniversary on December 13, 1978. Wishing you many more happy years together. From your children:
Peter & Jenny
John & Alice
Nancy
Anita
and grandchildren: Mark and Brenda.
Home address: R.R. #7, Ottawa 6, Ontario K2H 7Z2.

It is with joy and thankfulness to the Lord that we wish to celebrate with our parents and grandparents,

JOHN and ALEIDA VOORTMAN
(nee Simmelink)

the occasion of their 25th Wedding Anniversary on December 30, 1978. Congratulations Dad and Mom! It is our hope and prayer that God will continue to bless and keep you in the years ahead.
Trudy & Garry Prins; Brian, Sandra — Dundas
Jacelyn & John Larigenduen — Grimsby
Wilma — Toronto
Ron — at home
Home address: 294 Book Rd., Ancaster, Ont. L9G 3L1.

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Obituaries

On September 27, 1978 the Lord suddenly, but at His appointed time, took home to Him in Glory our dear wife, mother, grandmother and sister,

PAULINE FRIEND - Wagenaar

at the age of 72. Beloved wife of Klaas Friend. Mother of: Norma and Nick Friend Gay and Herman Roskamp Lydia and Jan Friend Joyce and Clarence Friend Ann and Chris Drenth Nancy Friend Karen and John Friend and 22 grandchildren.
Sister of:
G. Mantel-Wagenaar — Aylmer, Canada
G. Kostelijk-Wagenaar, The Netherlands.
Psalm 91:1,2. "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress; my God in whom I trust."
Home address: Box 267, Outlook, Wash. State, U.S.A.

Suddenly, on Monday, November 27, 1978, the Lord called to eternal rest,

AREND PIETER (Piet) KERSTEN
in his 60th year. Beloved husband of Tryntje Kersten-in't Veld. Father and grandfather of:

Arend & Dianne Kersten; Shelley, Lori Anne and Tricia — Kincardine, Ont.
Jane & Bob Lowe; Gavin — Mississauga, Ont.
Dick & Corinne Kersten; Derek, Michael — St. Catharines, Ont.
Cees & Bonnie Kersten; Marnie Lyn — Oakville, Ont.
Margaret Kersten — St. Catharines, Ont.
Mariam & Herb Sinke — St. Catharines, Ont.

The funeral service was held in the Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, St. Catharines, Ont. Rev. H. De Bolster officiating, on Thursday, Nov. 30, 1978 at 1:30 p.m. Interment at Victoria Lawn Cemetery, St. Catharines. Piet Kersten always had a great love for children. Our husband, dad and opa was predeceased by three grandsons, Richard Kersten, Gregory Lowe and Ryan Kersten. His task finished on earth, he was called home and we picture him walking the golden streets of heaven with his grandsons. That gives those of us who remain behind great assurance and comfort. This fact allows us to echo the words of his favorite hymn, "How Great Thou Art."
Home address: 8 Else St., St. Catharines, Ont. L2N 2B8.

Suddenly, on Monday, November 27, the Lord called Home His child, our dear uncle and great-uncle,

AREND PIETER KERSTEN

May the Lord comfort and strengthen our aunt and cousins in these difficult days.
Bill and Margaret Bom
Mary and Irene

"The Lord is my Shepherd". Psalm 23.
On Friday, November 24, 1978 it pleased the Lord to take unto Himself our dear daughter, sister, sister-in-law and aunt.

MARTHA DYKHUIS (Eizinga)

Dear wife of George Dykhuis and dear mother of Peter and Margaret. At the age of 55 years.
Mrs. G. Eizinga — St. Thomas
Gertrude & George Veenstra — London
Ann & Adrian Van Helvoort — St. Thomas
Wesley & Janet Veenstra — London
Grace Veenstra — London
Betty & Fred Morsink — Kitchener
David Van Helvoort — St. Thomas
Fred Van Helvoort — St. Thomas
Margaret Van Helvoort — St. Thomas

Obituaries

"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation." Isaiah 12:2.

This testimony was the source of strength and comfort in both the life and death of our beloved wife and mother,

MARTHA DYKHUIS (nee Eizinga)

who, on November 24, 1978, after a lengthy illness, went to be with her covenant Lord whom she served so faithfully in all aspects of life. The blessed hope of the Resurrection Day takes the sting out of our sorrow yet does not eradicate the void she leaves behind.

George Dykhuis
Peter
Margaret and Pieter Pereboom (eng.)
1804 Park Avenue, London, Ont. N5W 2J5.

We extend our condolences to the Pijper family and Rolinda Jager on the sudden death of

TOM PIJPER

Our only comfort is that Tom is now with his Lord. We pray that God may continue to strengthen and sustain you. Your friends, the families,
J. Beunk
T. Eerkes
P. Jager
B. Kamphuis.

"To Thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in thee I trust." Psalm 25.

On November 19, 1978 the Lord took home unto Himself into eternal glory our dear wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother,

JAPKE ZWAAGSTRA-Bosch

at the age of 78 years.
Dear wife of J. Zwaagstra — Westerbork, Netherlands.
Mother of:

Dirk Zwaagstra & Grietje Zwaagstra-Oosterhof — Westerbork
Pete Zwaagstra & Fennie Zwaagstra-Terpstra — Smithville
Foekje Vos-Zwaagstra & George Vos — Smithville
Froukje Snippe-Zwaagstra & Bert Snippe — St. Ann's
Siebe Zwaagstra & Trinie Zwaagstra-Boertien — Westerbork
Ankje Hakkenes-Zwaagstra & Nico Hakkenes — Assen
Frank Zwaagstra & Grietje Zwaagstra-Lunshof — St. Ann's
Elizabeth Sypkes-Zwaagstra & Andre Sypkes — Fenwick
Sietse Zwaagstra & Fenna Zwaagstra-Huisjes — Zuidwolde and 42 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.
The funeral service was held on Thursday, November 23, 1978 at 2 p.m. in Westerbork. The text was Psalm 25.

Real Estate

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Personal

A Christian gentleman (Senior) would like to meet Christian lady for companionship. Age about 55-65. If possible reply with photo and phone number to Box #4347, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 4L3.

Sincere gentleman, Chr. Ref., divorced, 42 years old, would like to correspond and meet a sincere Christian lady, 30 to 45 years of age. Please reply with recent photograph to: Box #4346, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara Street, St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 4L3.

B.C. Christian lady in late thirties, widow, with two children, would like to correspond with Christian gentleman, preferably Christian Reformed. Please write to Box #4350, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 4L3.

Christian gentleman, 44, wants to write Christian lady, early thirties. Send picture. Please write to box #4329, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 4L3.

Christian woman (29, divorced), living in southern Ontario, wishes to meet sensitive man of approximate same age. Will confidentially reply to all letters. Reply to Box #4349, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines L2R 4L3.

Een weduwnaar wonende in midden Ontario; leeftijd boven 70 jaar; in goede gezondheid, zoekt een huishoudster, liefst boven 65 jaar. Brieven aan Box #4348, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 4L3.

Teachers Needed

Kingston: The Kingston Christian School invites applications for a teaching position in the grades 2 and 3 (combined class). Duties to commence January 3, 1979. Please send applications to the principal, Mr. William R. Rang, Kingston Christian School, Wright Cres., Kingston, Ont. K7L 4T9.

Calgary: The Calgary Christian School will have January vacancies for the following positions: 1. remedial reading teacher for the elementary grades, 2. a teacher's aid for grades 2 and 3, 3. a Junior High English teacher, 4. a French teacher for grades 4 through 12. For further information, please contact: Mr. G. Vanderveen, principal, 2830-49th St. S.W., Calgary, Alta. T5E 3X9. 1-403-242-2896. Due to immigration difficulties, only Canadians or those with landed immigrant status need apply.

Teachers Needed

Guelph: The John Calvin Christian School of Guelph requires a part-time teacher commencing January 1979. Phone Jake Vriend, 824-8860 or write, 290 Water Street, Guelph, Ont.

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has an immediate position for a combined grade 1 and 2 teacher and an opening in early spring 1979 for a teacher in a combined grade 3 and 4 and part of 5.

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Miss Laura Weesles, principal
Box 317
Terrace, B.C. V8G 4B1
Telephone: 604-635-6173 (school)

Help Wanted

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Director

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Bethesda Christian Association for the Retarded,
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Secretary of the Board
20263 - 46A Ave.
Langley, British Columbia, V3A 5K5

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phone home: 335-2904
or bus. 528-1441

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10 p.m., Channel 13, Dec. 25, Jan. 1,
Jan. 8, and Jan. 15.

NEW YORK

Channel 9 (time & dates to be announced later).

AMES

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17, Dec. 24, and Jan. 7.

GRAND RAPIDS

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17, Dec. 24, and Dec. 31.

CLEVELAND

8 p.m., Channel 43, Dec. 26, Jan. 2,
Jan. 9, and Jan. 16.

SIoux CITY

Channel 14: 7 p.m. Dec. 20; 6:30
p.m. Dec. 30; 6:30 p.m. Jan. 5; and
7:30 p.m. Jan. 10.

MONCTON

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12, Dec. 19, and Dec. 26.

HALIFAX

9:30 p.m., Channel 5, Dec. 5, Dec.
12, Dec. 19, and Dec. 26.

SYDNEY

9:30 p.m., Channel 4, Dec. 5, Dec.
12, Dec. 19, and Dec. 26.

ST. JOHN'S

6:30 p.m., Channel 6, Dec. 5, Dec.
12, Dec. 19, and Dec. 26.

TORONTO

1 p.m., Channel 11, Dec. 10, Dec. 17,
Dec. 24, and Dec. 31.

VANCOUVER

Channel 8: 8:30 p.m. Dec. 4; 8:30
p.m. Dec. 13; 8:30 p.m. Dec. 18; and
7 p.m. Dec. 27.

CHICAGO

9:30 p.m., Channel 44, Dec. 26, Jan.
2, Jan. 16, and Jan. 23.

MADISON

6:30 p.m., Channel 27, Dec. 20, Dec.
27, Jan. 3, and Jan. 10.

WAUSAU

6:30 p.m., Channel 9, Dec. 20, Dec.
27, Jan. 3, and Jan. 10.

LA CROSSE

6:30 p.m., Channel 19, Dec. 20, Dec.
27, Jan. 3, and Jan. 10.

MIAMI

9:30 p.m., Channel 6, Dec. 24, Dec.
30, Jan. 6, and Jan. 13.





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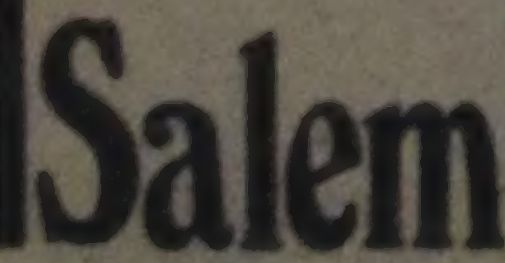
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LET'S PLAY CHESS

editor: Pete Layer

FIRST SERIES OF PROBLEMS IN DECEMBER

#765

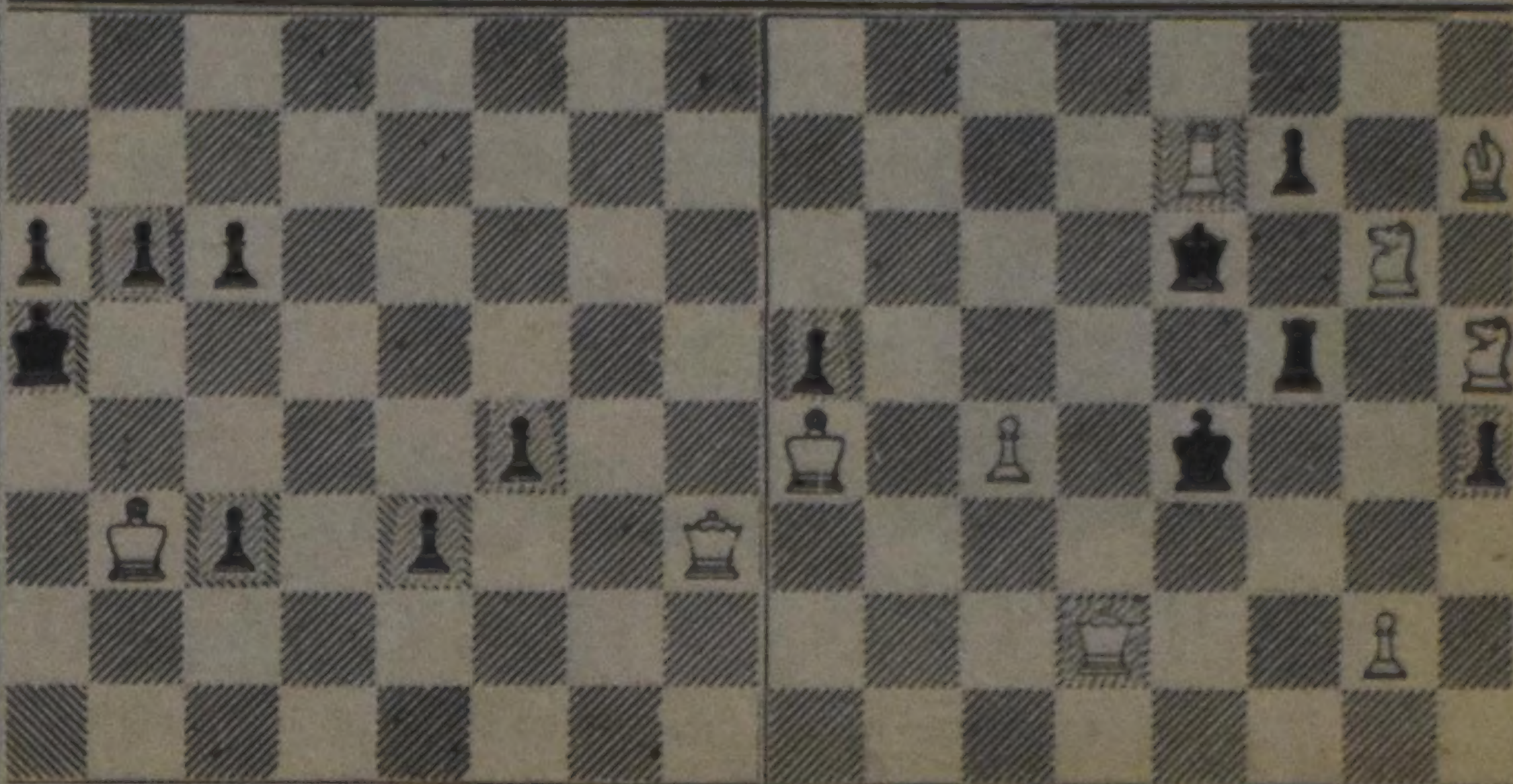
G. Heathcote
England, 1911

7

#766

H. Kamstra
Holland, 1935

6



2

8

3-mover 3 pts. 2-mover 2 pts.

- Notes:
1. Black has constructed a pawn maze which the Queen must penetrate in three moves for #765. Can you do it? Please indicate the key, threat and all variations.
 2. The Dutch problem is the more conventional of the two. Pins and potential pins usually make an interesting combination. Please give the key and threat, if any.
 3. The deadline for the December problems #765-768 will be given next week.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Dec. 9 "The Messiah" by G.H. Handel, performed by the Laudate Dominum Choir of Chatham. Director: John Postma, Organist, Douglas Haas of Kitchener. Park St. United Church, Chatham, Ont. 8 p.m.
- Dec. 16 Male choir concert of the Canadian Reformed Churches of Burlington, Ont. in the Rehoboth Church of Burlington, featuring a mixed program with much congregational singing.
- Dec. 17 Christmas celebration with Choral Society "Praise the Lord" of Brampton and Collegium Musicum Male Chorus of St. Catharines, with Andre Knevel, organist. 8 p.m. in Brampton, Second CRC.

Andre Knevel Organ Concerts
Dec. 9 — with the Toronto Choir "Praise the Lord" in the St. Thomas Anglican Church, St. Catharines, Ont. at 8:15 p.m. Jan. 20 — St. Luke Anglican Church, Mississauga, Ont. (1513 Dixie Rd.) at 8:15 p.m.

Lectures by the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
After the public lectures on Kingdom and Church in the Old and New Testament, Dr. J. Faber, Professor of Dogmatics, will offer a course about the topic "Kingdom and Church in History and Performed Doctrine". He hopes to deal with some major figures in the history of doctrine (Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, e.a.) and to round off the lectures with an exposition of the relation between Kingdom and Church in the Reformed confessions. December 14, and 21, Guideo de Bres Canadian Reformed Highschool, Library, (Stone Church Rd. between Upper Wellington & Upper Wentworth). Admission is free for registration. Call the College at 529-5569.

Dated	Mailed	Deadline for classified ads	Deadline for all other advertising
Dec. 15	Dec. 13	Dec. 11 (noon)	Dec. 8 (noon)
Dec. 22	Dec. 20	Dec. 18 (noon)	Dec. 15 (noon)
There will be no issue on December 29.			
Jan. 5	Jan. 3	Jan. 2 (9:00)	Dec. 29 (noon)

Books

A re-appearance of dispensationalism

Israel and the Nations in Prophecy, by Richard W. DeHaan; published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506, 1977; sixteenth printing, newly revised edition; 95 pages; price \$1.50 (U.S.). Reviewed by Rev. John D. Tangelder.

Richard W. DeHaan, popular teacher of the Radio Bible Class, Grand Rapids, in his little book, **Israel and the Nations in Prophecy**, tries to offer an explanation of future events by looking at the present Middle East crisis and the international political situation with all its complexities. He gives the modern dispensationalist line in matters prophetic.

"This book," writes DeHaan, seriously examines the Scriptures to determine the identity of the 'seed of Abraham'; and then sets forth in clear and understandable terms a general picture of that which will transpire in the end-time. Throughout the entire study the redemptive aspect of God's program is emphasized. The supernatural defeat of Russia and the hate-inspired cruelty of Anti-Christ are set forth in their prophetic perspective."

DeHaan believes that Israel as a nation has still a special role in God's program. He says that "the promises of earthly blessing to Israel are still in effect. We believe that the Lord will yet fulfill the pledges which He made to Abraham's physical descendants." "The earthly blessings promised to Abraham's seed are still the unique possession of the Jews. They are the Israelites of biblical prophecy. They are the people of divine destiny!"

The author is convinced that the Bible provides "solid" evidence that the revived Roman Empire is a western power. The present alignment of European nations may fit into the prophetic picture, and the Common Market in Europe could be of great significance. "Russia has a prominent role in the DeHaan's prophetic scheme. He writes, 'The Lord of Palestine is unique in God's program for another reason; it is here that the final overthrow of the armies of Russia will take place.' And he teaches that 'through the sudden and complete destruction of her armies, Russia will be the means of a great turning to faith in Jesus Christ — both Jews and Gentiles.'"

I have some serious questions about DeHaan's interpretation and view of Scripture. Is prophecy only about future events? Is prophecy meant to give detailed predictions, telling us exactly what will happen to nations, and Israel in specific? These impressions are created by the flood of literature constantly produced on prophetic themes. Dogmatic statements are made about the future of Russia, China and the European common market. Prophecy enthusiasts display little caution when they express themselves regarding unfilled prophecy.

Scripture never encourages us to dabble with future events for the sake of satisfying speculation, or our incurable curiosity. "Prophecy," says Charles Hodge, "is not designed to give us the knowledge of the future which history gives us of the past. Great events are foretold; but the mode of their occurrence, their details, and their consequences, can only be learned by the event."

What does the Bible mean by "Abraham's seed"? What place does Israel have in prophecy? I cannot agree with DeHaan's thesis that the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant will apply to the return of Israel to the "promised" land. The seed of Abraham is spiritual and not national.

What is meant by "Abraham's seed"? The Old Testament contains divine promises which in their literal application were meant for Israel, that is, for the Jews. Blessings of temporal nature were given to Abraham (Gen. 12:7). And the promise of Israel's return from Babylonian captivity was meant and fulfilled literally. But many prophecies do not have a literal but a spiritual fulfillment. One does not have to be a physical descendant of Abraham to belong to the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16; cf. Rom. 9:24). The Apostle Paul clearly states that the distinctives per-

taining to race or social status are no longer valid (cf. Gal. 3:28,29). The raising up of the "tabernacle of David" (Amos 9:11ff) is fulfilled when God visits the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:14ff). The apostle Peter tells us that the old titles once given to the covenant people of the Old Testament era now belong to the church (I Peter 2:9). The wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles has been broken down forever. There is now one church. Its members come from every race and nation, including the Jewish people (Eph. 2:13,19). No provision is made in God's redemptive plans for a separate Jewish church (Rom. 4:11). Today we can say, "The blessings promised to Israel are for the church."

DeHaan's book distresses me. The author spends more time on his prophetic schemes than on the

actions of those who are involved in the predicament of our times. We cannot be spectators of a game. We must be active in God's world until Jesus comes again. Our longing for Christ's return shouldn't be an escapism from our personal problems, or even the "great tribulation." The knowledge of Christ's return ought to affect our daily living. We are not to spend our time on

speculation but on living for the glory of God until the day of restoration. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless" (II Peter 3:11, 14).

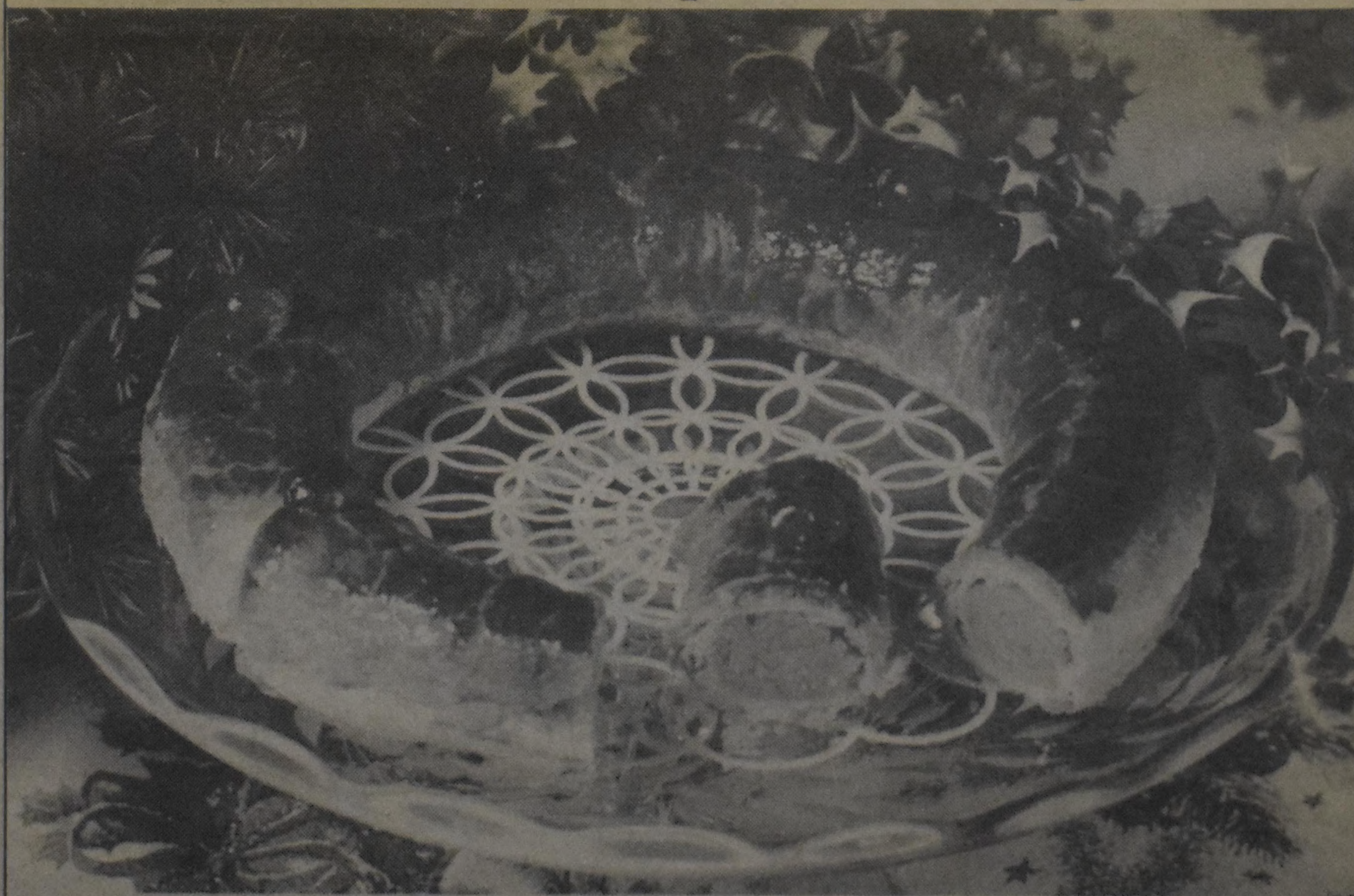
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Books

Jerusalem as you may see it today



Jerusalem. Time-Life Books Series: The Great Cities, by Colin Thubron. Photographer: Jay Maisel. Time-Life International, 1976. Distributed in Canada by GLC Publishing Ltd., 115 Nugget Ave., Agincourt, Ontario; 200 pages, large size: 9½" by 12"; price: \$15.95. Reviewed by Peter Sluys.

"If the traveler stands, as I did not long ago, on the summit of the Mount of Olives, he sees all the ancient city stretched in front of him. It is, perhaps, the most awe-inspiring view in the world, for here lies the soul city of an entire concept of God." So begins this most fascinating book which will intrigue you to the end.

No wonder: the author is Colin Thubron, born in London, England, descendant of the first English poet Laureate, John Dryden. He has traveled extensively in the Middle East, and has written various books about it. The pictures in this book are numerous. On almost every page are one or two color photographs which are in their own ways almost like paintings which convey the moods, the colors and perspectives, I easily recognize as typical portraits of the situations in Jerusalem as they impress themselves on visitors to that city. They are artistically blended into the page settings. That is why the chapter headings in the index tell you: "The Place of David: picture essay — the Wall of Joy and grief" (ch. 2); "The Heart of



An Arab schoolboy glances back into the shadows of an arched passageway. Such crooked, narrow streets, many with stone steps, lace the Old City.

Christendom: picture essay Venerable Sects" (ch. 5); "The Dome of the Rock: picture essay, The Jewel Box of Islam" (ch. 6). Pictures and stories go together.

The author is a fascinating story teller, although you may have to read it slowly since he has the gift of packing very much into each sentence and paragraph.

He meets people in Jerusalem's narrow streets, in market places, the cemeteries, by the wailing wall, the Dome of the Rock; in the Church of the Sepulchre and even ventures into places where no ordinary tourist may come. But then the author is no ordinary tourist: he doesn't just come to see things of the past, and stand in admiration by places which are described in the Bible, but he probes behind present attitudes of Moslems, Christians and Jews, blending skillfully the history of the city its people and three major world religions all centered in a intensified way in this marvelous city, so that you feel part of that long history. You have the feeling you tramp along with him in this hustling and bustling living city, even back into its past.

Jerusalem, you experience it as a dense concentration of what happens in our own communities, countries and the world at large; its conflicts and its peace, its pious worship and crass materialism; love and hatred all so much more intensified.

If you are searching for God, will you find it in Jerusalem? My own experience is similar to the authors: when you have faith in Christ, tramping through Jerusalem won't shatter it, but can greatly enrich it, but in a different way than you may expect. If you are still searching for God, a visit to Jerusalem could easily make you more sceptical of him, because of the strange conflicts you will encounter. On the mount of Olives you are dogged persistently by a Moslem boy who almost pushes you to "see Jesus' footprint" on its summit — for one dollar.

Regarding the church of the Sepulchre, let me quote from page 93: "What should a Christian expect to find on the site of his God's resurrection? Some want a simple, personal place where nothing intrudes between miracle and man; others something numinous and awe inspiring. And almost everyone demands a reflection of his own values, both religious and aesthetic. Almost all, of course, are disappointed. For it is not their own vision they discover in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Rather it is a history of human

frailty. For the place is maintained by six rival sects. Every stone and altar has been battled over, sequestered and jealously guarded." So it strikes you as a visitor to Jerusalem: the clashes between denominations are age-old and center around Golgotha. But it isn't edifying. You feel as a Christian that God's grace and mercy must be tremendously great to allow us divided Christians like the six church groups in the Church over Golgotha, to continue to witness about his Kingdom. You feel the sting of separate Christians going their own way, even fighting each other, shunning each other, degrading each other and thereby also the Gospel of Christ. In that way the Christian's faith grows in visiting Jerusalem.

Time-Life offers many books like these in its series on the great cities of the world. But Jerusalem is unique. It is a book which you must read slowly just as you sip choice wine to savor it fully. You must remember that it was the city God choose to live in at one time.

Tourneau out of tune

Success Without Compromise, by Richard H. Le Tourneau; published by Victor Books, a division of SP Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 1825, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, 1977; 176 pp; price \$1.95 U.S. pb. Reviewed by Rev. J.D. Tangelder.

The author is a son of the late R.G. Le Tourneau, a man famed for his road machinery and support for Christian missions. He serves as president of Le Tourneau College, Longview, Texas.

This is Dr. Tourneau's fourth book "in the pursuit of establishing a base of practical Christian living and a framework of what he claims to be 'real' education for our young people." He sees his book as "a consumer text report on Christianity."

Dr. Tourneau is a dispensationalist influenced by Hal Lindsey, author of *The Late Great Planet Earth*. He is also Arminian in his theology.

The author is moralist. As a moralist, he gives some helpful advice. But he also manages to give his opinion on the complex

Rhodesian and South African situation in a few paragraphs. And does "right" living always lead to material success? God doesn't measure success by a man's material prosperity. I cannot recommend this book to our Calvinist Contact readers.

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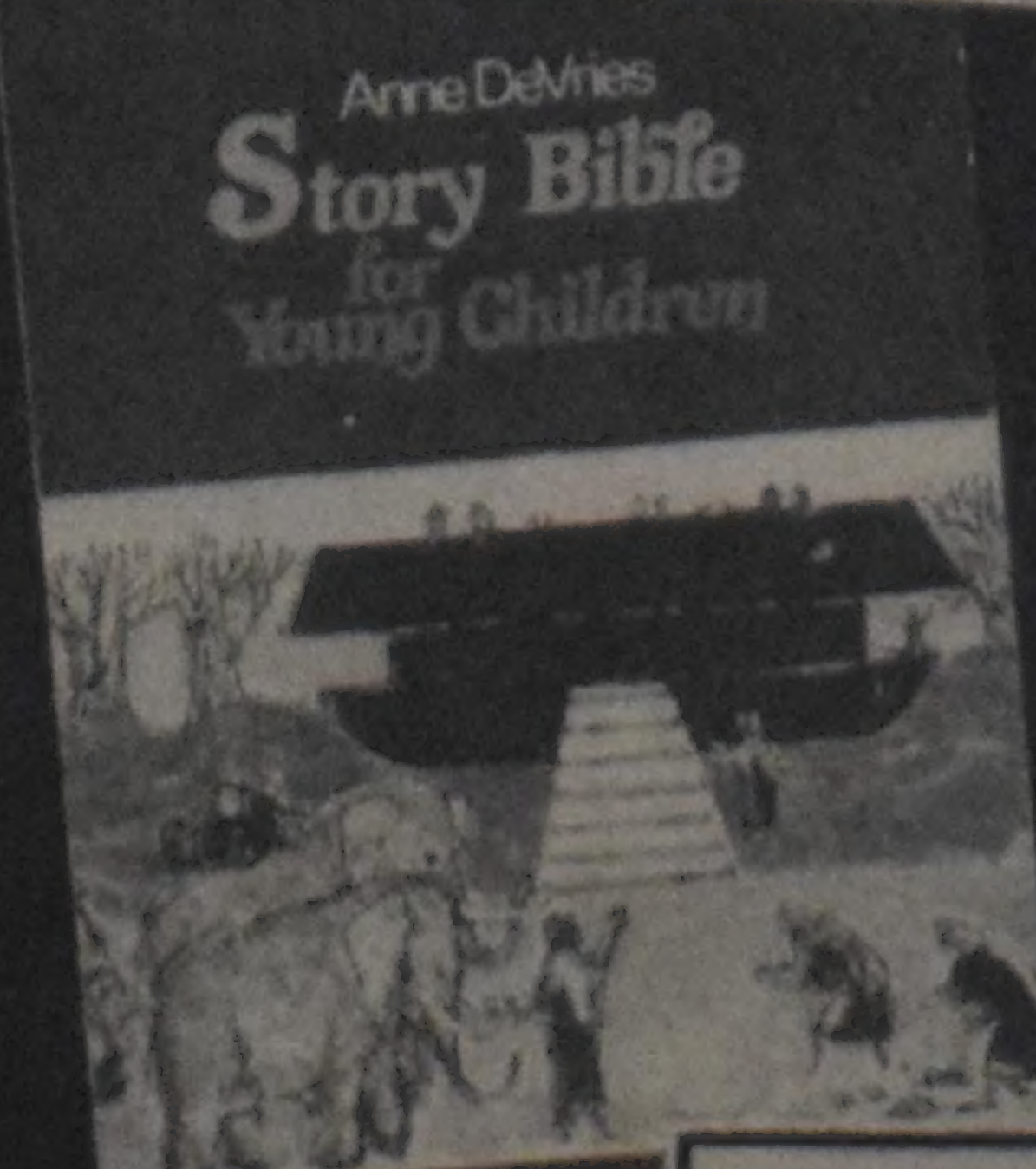
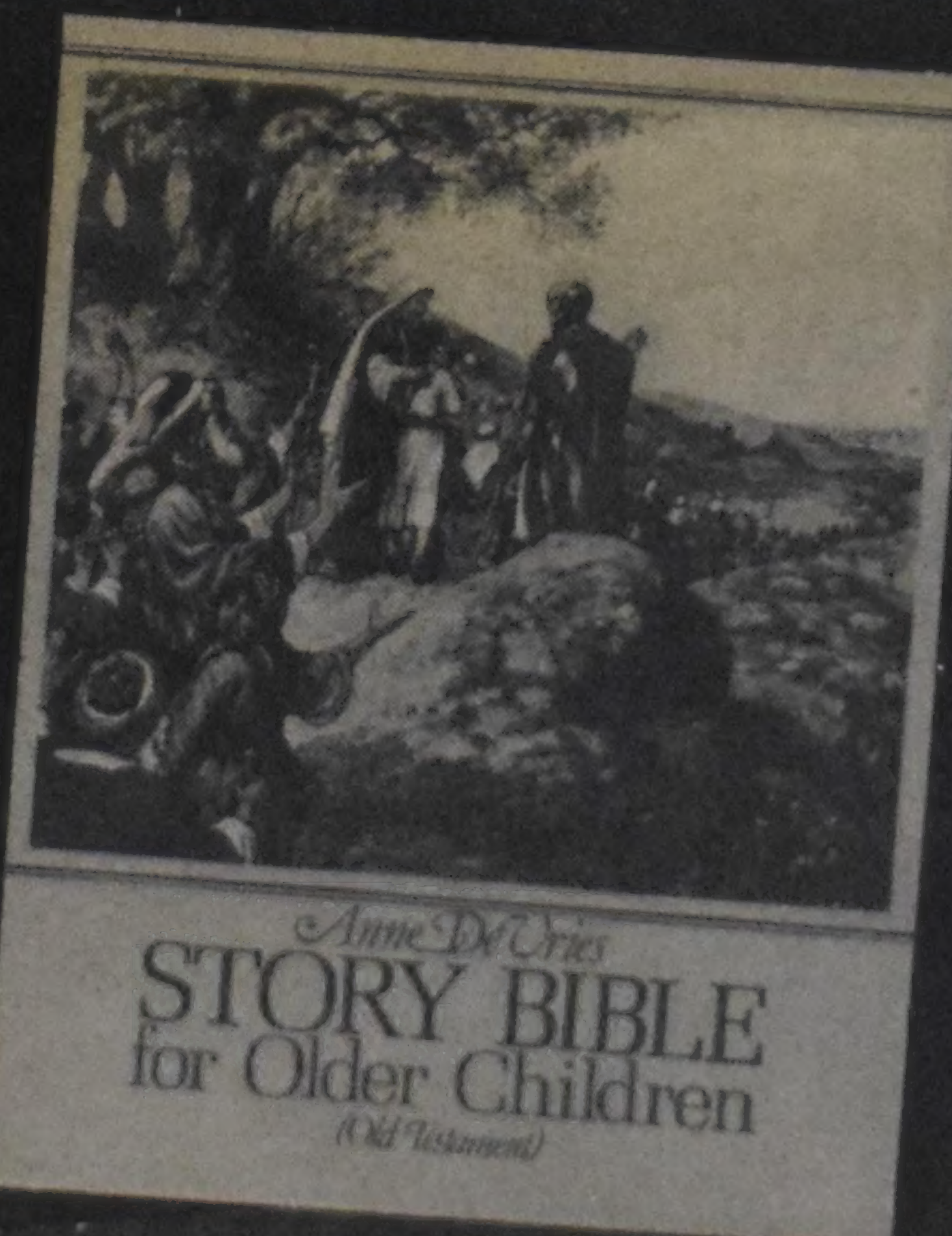
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